

# ugvm

The [uk.games.video.misc](http://uk.games.video.misc) Magazine

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The history of Nintendo's unfortunate 64-bitter

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# Cube Gets Primed!

## Issue 04

# ugvm

Maw! Fetchya gun! These is *varmint*s we's gots `ere!

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## Issue 04

# Welcome

Now that the time-consuming evil that is Christmas is all done and dusted, it's time to get back to some serious gaming. Feast your eyes on **ugvm04**!



This issue, we bring you a review of a game many critics have called the best game ever. A 3D update of a legendary 2D series. A series we haven't heard from since the days of the SNES. The force that is: **Metroid Prime**.

Other review highlights include the crap-or-not **Doshin the Giant**, Smilebit's **Jet Set Radio Future**, **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** and **Dragonball Z: Budokai**. You'll also notice our new retro section - **ugv.retro**, which this month houses a review of **Pacman Collection** on the GBA, and a feature on the famously awful Atari 2600 film licence **E.T.**

The **N64** gets the History Of... treatment over on page 6, and we've also a look at the **Evolution Of Bomberman**, one of Japan's biggest videogame characters, and almost as old as Mario himself.

I'd also like to say a big thankyou to all those people who downloaded ugvm03, and to those who have donated money to fund the bandwidth the unexpected surge in readers used. You're much appreciated!

Once again, the team have slaved over some cracking items for your delight and delectation. You'd best get reading then, don't you think?

deKay (Editor)

## What's Inside This Issue...



## Cover Story

Samus Aran is back, in glorious 3D!  
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Why was ET so awfully, awfully, crap?  
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## Review Scores Explained

**ugvm** uses a marks-out-of-5 system for scoring games in the reviews. We feel that percentage systems are silly, with there being little difference between, say 75 and 76%. Marks out of 10 are often pointless as well, as very rarely do games score under 5 or 6/10. Having 5 points to the scale lets us get down to the nitty-gritty: is this game any good, or is it just a pile of old pants?

You can think of the scores as being roughly equivalent to these simple to digest phrases:

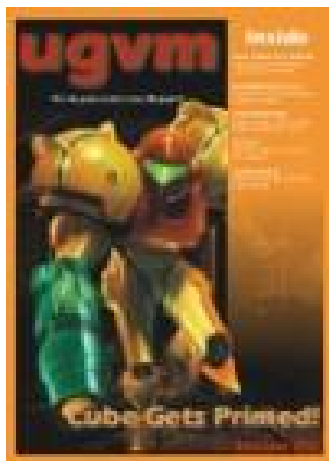
**1/5 - "Not even worth a look"**

**2/5 - "Only think about it if you're a real fan of this type of game"**

**3/5 - "Average. Probably still playable, but not the best of its kind"**

**4/5 - "A good game, perhaps with just one or two minor flaws"**

**5/5 - "You need to own this game. Now."**



## Awards

Games which score 4/5 also gain the coveted **ugvm Silver Award**, and games achieving the top marks of 5/5 are awarded the even more fantastic **ugvm Gold Award**. These awards are to show that these games really are something you want to play.



## Comment

# New Year's Play

**Tim Miller** bids you all a Happy New Year...

January is ordinarily a relatively slow month for games releases, since companies want to get all their goods out in time for the Christmas rush. Games are released as they are, sometimes unfinished, sometimes bugged to the ends of the earth.

The Getaway is a relatively fun game - especially for those of us who live and work in London (even if the road I work on isn't actually there - accurately mapped, my posterior). But enjoyment of the games can be seriously marred by the bugs that crop up at frequent intervals. People disappear, sink into the pavement, and walk through walls. Sometimes you can't attack people or pick up weapons when you're standing on stairs. None of the bugs are hidden, and they should have been picked up in play-testing.

No company wants to release games in January, since they'd then be competing against the half-price games in the sales. But if The Getaway had been kept back for just two months, it could have been a remarkable game, not a forgettable one.

Metroid Prime and Xbox Live are launching in March. Until then, there's nothing remarkable on the horizon, nothing new to spend Christmas money on. I could be urging you all to get The Getaway on release, but instead I'll tell you to pick up one of our gold award winners to satiate your gaming appetite. But don't rush.

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# ugvm News

What we've been getting excited about in the ugvm newsgroup

## ugvm hits the big time!

Downloads of Issue 03 of **ugvm** went through the roof over the release weekend, when links to the magazine site appeared on some high-profile websites - most notably Slashdot! Over 25Gb of downloads took place in just 48 hours, as the 'Slashdot Effect' kicked in. Over the course of the following few weeks, more and more other sites picked up on it, including Retrogames, Classic Gaming, and the French retrogaming site "Gros Pixels". We were mentioned on forums the world over, including the Edge and Nintendo forums, and no end of newsgroups. One of the more interesting articles about **ugvm** was on December's Retrogaming Radio show. Shane R. Monroe enthused about the magazine, praising its quality and professionalism.

Unfortunately, this new found fame has come at a cost. Our web servers used 15Gb over the allowed bandwidth and now we have a big fat bill to pay. If you fancy helping out with a small donation, head over to the **ugvm** website to find out how.

If you're a new reader to **ugvm**, we'd love to hear about where you heard about us. If you like the magazine, why not tell your friends? If you post to forums or newsgroups, consider putting a link to the site in your sig. If you have a website, link to us from there. Thanks for the support everyone. It's your enthusiasm that keeps us going!

## New Game Boy!

After months of speculation, Nintendo have announced a follow-up to the Game Boy Advance - the Game Boy Advance SP.



Contrary to some rumours, it is NOT an entirely new Game Boy. It's the same spec as a standard GBA, but with some cosmetic changes. The biggest and most important of these is the inclusion of a back-lit display! No longer will you have contort your wrists to get the best light, least glare combination! The GBA SP also boasts an internal rechargeable Li-Ion battery, and a hinged case to allow it to be folded up. Size-wise, it's even smaller than a GBA even when open! Expect a UK release in March!

## News in Brief

### Gaaammmeesss or Gms?

A letter in Edge provoked a long discussion over whether games are better when they are longer, or when they are shorter. Edge's correspondent claimed that shorter games are better, since he didn't have a lot of time to complete them in. Others have argued that shorter games are poor value for money, and that games should be about playing them, not completing them.

We'd love to know your views. Letters to the normal address, please!

### Sale of the Century

The post-Christmas sales kicked off just before Christmas, but pickings are scarce this year for the videogames bargain hunter. Sale prices in Game are only around £5 less than the RRP, and the Dixons group aren't having a sale, preferring instead a "3 for 2" promotion.

There are bargains around if you look, however. Woolworths has reduced a lot of

games on its website, though the instore availability is a little patchy. Advance Wars (GBA) for £22 is an absolute bargain, as is Evil Twin (PS2) for £15. Amazon has also included quite a few games in its sale, though the quality of the titles leaves a little to be desired! HMV's sale is much the same as any other sale they've had over the past year, except they've also got Aggressive Inline for the Gamecube or Playstation 2 at £20.

Well done Woolies - the rest of you can try harder next year!

### The Getaway Getting Away

Sales for The Getaway have been pleasing for Sony, but they've now run into trouble with BT. One of the missions in the game, where you have to dress as a BT engineer before murdering policemen, has caused the telecoms company to ask that the game be withdrawn from sale and edited. It would, apparently, encourage attacks on BT engineers.

Sony have agreed to edit the game, and the second pressing will in all likelihood just

miss out that mission.

### On The Game (Network)

Those with SkyDigital will probably have watched, at some point, channel 223. It's a channel devoted to games, and sits just before ITV2 in the listings.

At least, it's supposed to be devoted to games. As lamented by Lex Gray and others, the channel now devotes half its screen to a text messaging chatroom (at 50p a message!) and half its time to showing females in varying states of undress.

A campaign is now underway to get the station to revert to its old format, or for Sky to drop it completely.

### GamesTM, not trademarked

A new multi-format magazine was released in December, hoping to compete against Edge, but also aiming to fill the gap left by Arcade's demise. The bi-monthly GamesTM is a good read, with only a few factual errors in its many articles.

## ugvm Awards 2002 FairPlay Doesn't Play

In late December and early January, Steve Jackson and deKay ran a poll of the best games of 2002. 5 games for each current system were shortlisted, and ugvm newsgroup subscribers voted. And the results are:

Best Game Boy Advance Game:  
**Advance Wars** (70% of the votes)

Best Dreamcast Game:  
**Rez** (53%)

Best PC Game:  
**Unreal Tournament 2003** (50%)

Best Playstation 2 Game:  
**ICO** (55%)

Best Gamecube Game:  
**Super Mario Sunshine** (45%)

Best Xbox Game:  
**Halo** (85%)

You were also asked to vote for an overall best game from all those nominated. And you chose...

**BEST GAME OF 2002:**  
**ICO (PS2)**  
with 20% of the votes

It was a very close thing, with Halo and GTA: VC coming in joint second place with 13% of the votes each. Expect more information and full stats on the **ugvm** website soon!

The Fairplay campaign (as reported in ugvm passim) took place in the first week of December, and was followed by much debate as to whether it'd had any effect. With each set of sales figures released, campaign doubters claimed that they showed they had no effect, and the campaign enthusiasts claimed they showed there was one. The campaign website hasn't been updated since the boycott week, so official statements haven't been made. However, here comes the science bit.

There are two effects which would cause a change in sales for a particular week to differ from the same week in the previous year. One is an overall more or less buoyant market, meaning that sales in every week are higher or lower than the previous year. The other is a specific week effect, looking at whether the sales in one week (in our case, the week of the boycott) are higher or lower than the predicted level given by the year-on-year effect.

Econometric tests we can run on the data are limited by the scarcity of it. Using data from Charttrack, we can model two weeks either side of the campaign week for each of this and last year. This gives us only ten observations. Over these ten observations, we will need to run a time series model with dummies representing weeks 47 to 51, and also a dummy variable for the year.

Despite the relatively low degrees of freedom, we can find the residuals for each observation - that is, the difference between the figure predicted by the model and the actual figure. By looking at the residual compared to the actual figure for week 49 2002, we find that there is a negative residual (that is, sales are lower than the model would predict), but the residual is very small (-0.249 over 143.8) and statistically extremely insignificant, even at the 50% level.

In short, the campaign didn't have an effect on unit sales. Whether it had an effect on the industry's structuring remains to be seen.

## PS2 tops Xmas sales

The last week in November saw UK sales of 90,000 PS2 units, compared with 21,000 Xbox and 10,000 Gamecube console sales. With Sony firmly at the number one spot (no doubt helped by the release of GTA: Vice City), Microsoft climbs into second place in terms of installed user base, with Splinter Cell and the Sega GT/Jet Set Radio Future bundle pack being responsible for the recent surge in sales. Although Nintendo's Gamecube has now been pushed back to third place, this is mainly due to no 'big name' games out for the Christmas buyers. Sales elsewhere in the world still have the Gamecube placed above the Xbox.

Some relief for Nintendo will be in the form of the Gameboy Advance, which shifted 27,000 units in the same week, and has a larger worldwide user base than both the Xbox and the Gamecube combined. With two new Pokémon games just released in Japan, we can only expect this to expand further.

## No "Megaton"

It looks as though most of us were fooled. There we were, all waiting impatiently for the December 3rd "Megaton" Nintendo announcement, and... nothing. Nothing at all. Rumours abound - with Nintendo supposedly buying both Sega and Capcom, or suing Sony over use of the name Playstation (which it appeared that Nintendo owned all along).

Other possible announcements involved a possible release of Metroid Prime and/or Zelda for the GC before Christmas in the UK, or word of Pokémon Online.

Alas, they all just turned out to be mere wishful thinking. Nintendo had never planned to make any kind of announcement on December 3rd, and the whole thing seems to have stemmed from an article in Japanese videogames magazine V-Jump. It was all a bit of a let-down really.

Each issue, **ugvm** looks at a console from the past. There's no way that anyone could possibly hope to own each and every gaming machine ever released - not even the BFI's got there yet, and they've been trying for years. This article should carry a health warning therefore: reading about other consoles could seriously damage your wallet.

# N64: Reality Check

This issue, **Jim Taylor** tells the story of Nintendo's much maligned 64-bit console.

Confirmation of a follow-up to the SNES was first heard of in August 1993 when Nintendo announced "Project Reality", a collaboration with Silicon Graphics to produce a 64 bit home console with the graphical capabilities of a Silicon Graphics workstation. Many in the industry scoffed at such a bold move, dismissing it as shock tactics to dent sales of Sony's new Playstation console, especially as nothing would be seen of the new console for quite some time.

There was also some question as to the media the console would use; initially Nintendo stated they would be using CDs, possibly utilising some of the technology in the failed Sony/Nintendo SNES CD joint venture. Eventually, though, the tried and tested cartridge format was chosen, this allowed instant game access and also gave Nintendo complete control over the manufacturing process.

## May To December

Little more information came out of NCL headquarters until July 1994 when a name was given to the console: "Ultra 64". However that was all that was heard until the January of 1995, when Silicon Graphics announced that the design of the Ultra 64's main chip was complete and ready to enter production. The console was on target for the console to launch by the summer, although as little game footage had been seen many believed Nintendo would not be able to make this deadline. Sure enough, in May 1995 came the first of many delays to the project; Ultra 64 would now not be released until December 95 in Japan.

Come November 1995 the first games were shown to the public and the name was officially changed to Nintendo 64; however, very few of the games shown were playable so yet again not many were surprised when it was revealed that the console wouldn't be coming out until April 1996. And then finally, in February 1996 the release date was put back again, this time to June.

So, what could have caused all these delays? Common belief is that Shigeru Miyamoto hadn't

finished Mario 64 to his satisfaction. It's possible that a rushed version could have been released in order to prevent one of the many delays but Mr Miyamoto convinced Hiroshi Yamauchi, Nintendo's president, to hold back the N64's release until he had completed the game. It was a good job they did. When the N64 was released in Japan on the 23rd of June 1996, it came with a game hailed by the games press and public at large, as a revolution. The first platformer to really take advantage of the 3D capabilities of the new generation of consoles, Mario 64 set new standards in gameplay and graphics and is widely thought of even now as one of the greatest games of all time. The N64 was off to a flying start. This was backed up by the US launch which followed on 29 September 1996 and was equally as successful with the console selling out countrywide.



The UK launch followed some months later on 1 March 1997. Among the UK launch games were Pilotwings 64, Turok: Dinosaur Hunter (which retailed for an astonishing £70 at the time), Shadows of the Empire, Wave Race 64 and, of course, Mario 64. Although they had a decent line up of games, Nintendo's main problem was fighting off Sony's Playstation which had already surprised everyone in the industry by pretty much seeing off Sega's Saturn with minimal effort.

At launch, the price of the N64 was £250 which, when compared to the £200 PlayStation seemed quite reasonable. However, Nintendo were undercut by Sony dropping the price of the PlayStation to £130



## 10 into 64...

The N64 had some definite 'must-own' titles. Here are the ten best (in no particular order, or there'll be fights and all sorts).

### Goldeneye

Until Halo came along, the best console FPS ever made. Still appears in best games lists today. Also see the follow-up, Perfect Dark.



### Super Mario 64

Redefined the art of 3D platforming and the best launch game ever. As with Goldeneye, it's still thought of highly today (and rightfully so).



### Zelda: Ocarina of Time

Together with Mario and Goldeneye, this is one of the greatest games ever made. Pure genius. Its sequel, Majora's Mask, is also worth tracking down.



### Lylat Wars

Superb shoot-em-up often criticised for its "on-rails" approach. Still brilliant and inventive despite the stupid name.



### Super Smash Bros

Although not as accomplished as its Gamecube offspring this quirky fighter pushed the N64 to its limits.



### Mario Kart 64

Some would argue the SNES original is better, although they may have a point. It's still worth owning - if only for 4-player mode.



### Banjo-Kazooie

Although not as good as Mario 64, still an excellent platformer with some beautiful graphical touches. See also the sequel Banjo-Tooie.

### Pilotwings 64

Sequel to the SNES launch game, Pilotwings is a lovely, slightly bizarre at times but still addictive flight simulator.

### Mario Tennis/Golf

Although cheating by including these two together they're both offbeat sports games featuring the Mario clan. Novel use of GB linkup and fun party gameplay make these two stand out from the crowd.

### Sin & Punishment

Import-only Treasure shoot-em-up. Fantastic gameplay and graphics make this an essential import.

just days before the March 1 release date. Despite selling out of the initial shipment sales soon tailed off, which unfortunately forced Nintendo to drop £100 off the price within just two months of the console's launch, angering many who had bought the console already. Yet despite the temporary boost brought on by the price cut, sales had slowed again by the end of the year until one game came along that surprised everyone and put the N64 back on track.

### Bond, James Bond

No one expected much from a game based on a two year old film licence, and yet Goldeneye will go down in history as the first true console FPS that worked. It impressed virtually everyone who laid eyes on it and is still regarded today as one of the best games ever made, and the game to which all console FPSs are compared. Word of mouth and good reviews spread

and the N64's first Christmas (which was initially beginning to look a bit worrying for Nintendo) was a rousing success. All of which was thanks to Nintendo's UK based 'second-party' developer Rare.

### The Rise of Rare

In 1995 Rare were only really known to people as the developers of Donkey Kong Country and quirky smash-em-up game Blast Corps - although some of the older generation knew them from their previous incarnation of Ultimate Play the Game.

Over the N64's lifespan, Rare cemented their reputation as one of the few companies to really produce games worthy of the N64. Following Goldeneye they continued to earn acclaim with Diddy Kong Racing which proved to be everything that Mario Kart 64 wasn't. Yet more accolades came courtesy of Banjo-Kazooie - although not as good or revolutionary as Mario 64 it was still a superb game with some innovative gameplay and lovely graphics. Donkey Kong 64 followed along with the expansion pak but to many it was just a rehash of Banjo-Kazooie and due to the "collect everything" nature of the game it earned criticism from some quarters.

Later came Jet Force Gemini, a title that didn't sell too well but one that still has its fans. Later still came Perfect Dark - the long awaited follow-up to Goldeneye. Again, this went down exceedingly well with the console's owners although many thought that it was still outclassed by Goldeneye. Towards the end of the N64's life Rare released Banjo-Tooie which built and expanded on the first game's ideas. Last but certainly not least came Conker's Bad Fur Day, an adult platformer with a wicked sense of humour that showed, a little too late, that the N64 wasn't a kid's console. On the whole an impressive pedigree.

### Join the party

Nintendo's 49% stake in Rare meant that they were one of the first developers to sign up to Nintendo "Dream Team": an exclusive list of developers signed to produce games for the console. Although including some big names such as Electronic Arts and Konami, more conspicuous were the developers that were missing such as Namco and Eidos. Easily the biggest space was that left by Square.

Although relatively unknown elsewhere, in Japan they were responsible for the massive-selling Final Fantasy series (which of course later became massive in the west too). Square had previously been one of Nintendo's most ardent supporters, so it was a surprise that they shunned the N64 in favour of the larger CD storage capacity of Sony's Playstation. Further problems came from Sony's perceived "adult"

## Expansion

At the N64's launch there was talk of an add-on known as the 64DD: a disk drive based companion to the N64 that used 64Mb MO disks. It was also going to come with a 4Mb expansion pak for the N64 itself to allow for larger games. However the 64DD's release was constantly postponed and put-back over the console's life-span. The Expansion Pak itself though was brought out on its own; the first game to take advantage of it was Turok 2 which offered a high-resolution mode for those that had one. Later Rare's Donkey Kong 64 came bundled with a Pak, as the game wouldn't run without it. A few more games used the pak, such as Perfect Dark which pretty much required one to get the most out of the game, and a few others which provided high-res modes.



As for the 64DD itself, from an initial target launch date of the end of 1997 it was continually put back until it finally came out in Japan only in December 1999.

Due to the expected small take-up it was available through mail order only. For the cost of 2,500 Yen (about £12.50) per month for a period of 12 months, you would get the 64DD itself together with access to an online service, a modem cartridge (including cables and software), the Expansion Pak, and six DD titles, which were sent to subscribers bi-monthly: Doshin the Giant (later remade as a Gamecube game - see the review this issue!), F-Zero X Expansion Kit, Sim City 64, Paint Studio (plus mouse), Mario Artist: Talent Studio (plus capture cartridge), and Polygon Studio. The last three of which were not actually games but painting and modelling programs.

Possibly the only title of any lasting interest is the F-Zero Expansion Kit which let you design your own courses for the game.



style compared to Nintendo's "kiddy" style, due in part to "cool" games such as Tomb Raider and Resident Evil only appearing on rival machines. Unfortunately this lack of third-party support is what ultimately caused the N64's downfall, when compared to Sony's massive library of games (despite the poor good-to-bad ratio) people looked at the amount of games available and went for the Playstation instead.

All this meant that Nintendo relied on its first and second party games to push the N64, and although these were of an impressive quality they were not enough to swing the public away from Sony.

### The Legend of Zelda

Despite the impressive performances of Mario 64, Diddy Kong Racing and of course Goldeneye that kept the N64 selling well into the next year, the console was still being outsold by the Playstation. Fortunately along came Rare once again with Banjo-Kazooie. Given a summer release it helped buoy the N64 until Christmas when Nintendo had something special ready to come out...

For the N64's second Christmas, the console looked set to face a similar situation to the first year, until Zelda: Ocarina of Time was finally released. Originally due back in the console's first year this was another Shigeru Miyamoto project that was only put out when he was completely happy with it. As with Goldeneye the previous year, Zelda, along with F-Zero X, sold exceedingly well and gave the console a second successful Christmas.

Sadly 1999 saw very little to help the N64 regain market share. Although there were a few high-points such as the releases of Jet Force Gemini and Super Smash Bros neither of these sold in huge numbers and no real big-name games came out. Perfect Dark, the long awaited sequel to Goldeneye was put back time and again until the following year. For the third Christmas the only "big" game was Donkey Kong 64 which came bundled with the expansion pak (see the Expansion boxout). Unfortunately, this failed to sell as well as Nintendo hoped, partly due to the price, and the N64's future began to look cloudy.

In the N64's third year with the lack of any killer games on the immediate horizon, Nintendo tried to aid sales by bringing out Pokémon Stadium together with the GB link-up pak that allowed you to see your Pokémon on the big screen. Although it sold well it came too late to really turn things around. Later games to make use of the GB link included Mario Golf and Mario Tennis, but on the whole it was an underused peripheral that didn't really live up to its potential.

### Perfect Final

30th of June 2000. Finally, the moment that N64 owners had been holding out for: the release of Perfect Dark. After two years of screenshots and anticipation Rare delivered the follow-up to one of the N64's most popular titles: Goldeneye. Eschewing the Bond licence in favour of a sci-fi bound plot, Perfect Dark expanded on Goldeneye's missions and multi-player modes and made full use of the expansion pak to enrich the game's environments. Although many believed the single-player mode of Goldeneye was superior few could argue with the multitude of multiplayer options available. However of the two it seems history still favours Goldeneye.



Perfect Dark was followed that Christmas by Zelda: Majora's Mask. Although both games sold well they came too late in the day to save the N64's bacon and this was the last big Christmas the console would see.

Although it was now in its twilight days 2001 saw the N64 receive some brilliant games: top Japanese shoot-em-up Sin & Punishment, Rare's massive sequel to Banjo-Kazooie: Banjo-Tooie and finally the game that started out as yet another cutesy platformer but got lost along the way, Conker's Bad Fur Day.

By this stage details of Nintendo's next console had begun to surface so attention, which the N64 was barely getting by this point anyway, slipped away leaving it consigned to history. However it will always be remembered for its groundbreaking games, the N64 can lay claim to hosting three of the best games ever made. How many other consoles can say the same?

### Useful Links

<http://www.ebay.co.uk/>  
For cheap, and not so cheap, N64 games  
<http://ign64.ign.com/>  
Archives of reviews and tips etc.

# Bomberman Evolution

**OJLim** gives us the low down on everyone's favourite explosives expert...

Video games are all about innovation today. People clamour for shiny new graphics and new innovative gameplay (see: Blinx on the Xbox. Or not). Yet one of the most successful franchises in video game history has had only one major innovation in its 17-year history. This hasn't prevented it from receiving mostly rave reviews with each subsequent new release, however.

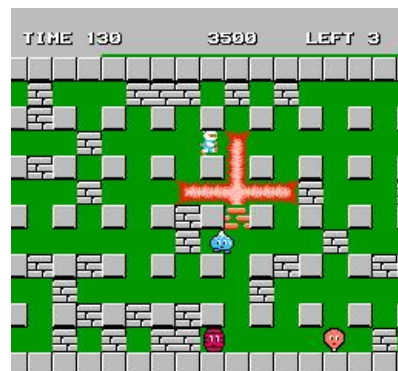
Welcome to Bomberman. Probably the most recognizable Japanese video game character after Mario, Sonic, and the 386 Pokémon that currently exist. Like the aforementioned franchises, Bomberman has been one of the few video game characters who has had his own cartoon show spin-off.

Before Bomberman, there was Eric and the Floaters: a Spectrum game released by Hudson Soft in 1983. You took control of Eric (a green man with a white hat) and your task was to kill all the purple sperm-shaped 'Floaters' on each level. The only arsenal you had were bombs which would explode in a cross-shape upon detonation a few seconds after being dropped. Additionally, blocks lay in your path and you generally had to blow some blocks up to get to the Floaters. Annoyingly, the Floaters seemed to have some magnetic attachment to you - meaning that it was very easy to die. I had a go at it and managed to get to Level 4,

(diarrhoea level, where you drop bombs without control) before giving up.

Eric and the Floaters was, nevertheless, one-player Bomberman without the branding. Hudson Soft took the game and reworked it, resulting in Bomberman two years later on the NES. This time, you took control of a Lego-esque white robot and your goal was to kill all the enemies in the level (which thankfully no longer looked like purple-shaped sperm but rather pink balloons with faces). However, the magnetic AI this time was thrown out of the window and replaced with enemies who just walked around and didn't actually attack you unless you stood in its path. A valuable addition to Bomberman was that hidden within some of the blocks were power-ups - a fire icon which would incrementally increase your bombs explosion range, a blue shoe that would make Bomberman move faster, and a bomb icon which would increase the number of bombs you could place at any one time.

Unfortunately, this does not add up to a fun experience. In fact, the only thing Bomberman had over Eric and the Floaters was purely aesthetic; arguably, the magnetic AI of the Floaters provided more entertainment than the wander-around AI of the Bomberman enemies.



NES Bomberman, 1985

A Bomberman sequel was released on the NES in 1991; in the meantime three Japanese Bomberman games were released on the PC-Engine in 1990, '91, and '93. The Amiga was graced with Bomberman in 1991 under the name of Dynablasters - the name change apparently due to fears that the name Bomberman would be linked to the IRA. In the US, arcade versions of Bomberman appeared under the name Atomic Punk. 1993 saw the release of Super Bomberman on the SNES (complete with multiplayer adapter).

These games added multiplayer to the mix, with the Amiga version boasting 5 players simultaneously, requiring 4 joysticks (two connecting through a special printer port adapter) and the keyboard. Players now squared off and had to try to blow each other up. Power-ups were hidden away in blocks once again, and in addition those previously mentioned, new power-ups such as Kick (kick bombs away), Punch (punch bombs over walls), and Line Bombs (place all your bombs down in one go) were added to the proceedings. Bomberman was one of the first multiplayer/party games and games would often be punctuated with people screaming

## Further Information

Pictures of how Bomberman has looked over the years:  
<http://bombermanfans.uhome.net/bomberman/evolution/>  
 More Bomberman stuff than you can shake a kangaroo at:  
<http://www.bomberman.info/>

## Timeline

### The main changes in Bomberman lore



1983  
Eric and the Floaters



1993  
Super Bomberman



1996  
Saturn Bomberman



1997:  
Bomberman 64



2002  
Bomberman Generation

in glee, taunting each other and much controller breakage. Multiplayer Bomberman became the franchise's selling point. Mega Bomberman was released on the Megadrive with the somewhat pointless addition of kangaroos which Bomberman could ride. Super Bomberman on the SNES bore three sequels, with only Super Bomberman 2 adding anything decent to the game (a glove power-up). By Super Bomberman 4, the game was becoming a tired franchise.

This would all change on the release of Saturn Bomberman in 1996. Originally conceived for the PC-Engine FX (but never released) Saturn Bomberman is Hudson Soft's shining achievement. While not standing out as a graphical achievement over its 16-bit predecessors (as Sega were desperately trying to achieve with its Saturn games), Saturn Bomberman benefited from the inclusion of a 10-man multiplayer mode. To fit that many players on a screen, Hudson Soft also took the step of including a widescreen mode. This had the effect of

shrinking all the players down to a miniscule size, meaning that many people would probably not have ever been able to enjoy this mode fully (who had a 16:9 TV in 1996?) - not to mention the difficulty in finding 9 other people to play it with or space around the TV to fit them all. Nevertheless, Saturn Bomberman stands as the pinnacle of Bomberman goodness. It could only really go downhill from there.

Atomic Bomberman was released on the PC in 1997 to nobody's delight. Hudson Soft allowed Interplay to develop the PC version and Interplay somehow managed to suck all the charm out of the game. The anime stylings of previous Bomberman games were replaced with an ugly pseudo-3D look. Additionally, the game was chockfull of irritating American surfer dude samples which took up half your hard drive space and slowed the game down. However, Hudson Soft managed to make a bigger mistake than Interplay. Looking to innovate further, Bomberman 64 really did bring in a 3D view. Presumably to enhance the single-player experience (which it didn't) it also was incorporated into the multiplayer mode and, by upsetting the balance of the game, ruined the it.

The untimely death of the Saturn due to the success of the Playstation meant Bomberman needed an amazing PSX release. Sadly, Bomberman World (1998) was another Hudson Soft joke with its odd isometric view - why they couldn't just port Saturn Bomberman is a mystery. As a

result, Bomberman has never taken off on the PSX and remains unseen on the PS2.

Sadly, Hudson Soft also had the misfortune of releasing Bomberman Online (2001) on the Dreamcast in its dying days. Sad, because not only did the online mode go largely unappreciated (being the whole point of this incarnation) but Bomberman had finally sorted out its visuals - the cel-shaded style worked and the almost-3D playing surfaces no longer distracted from the game. Additionally, new games were introduced to the Bomberman world, out of which, Panel Paint (aka Reversi) is highly enjoyable. In this game, each player has to paint the surfaces in their colour. The colouring is achieved by exploding bombs. When a player dies, that person loses all their squares and re-spawns. Much shouting ensues when the leader dies within the last seconds on the game.

Happily, cel-shaded Bomberman has just been released on the Gamecube, under the guise of Bomberman Generation. The single player mode is still nothing to write home about, but 4 player mode is thankfully enjoyable. Meanwhile, Bomberman Online lives on in Japan and Korea on the PC. Barring Nintendo-exclusive console rights, don't be surprised if Bomberman shows up on an Xbox or Playstation near you. It deserves to be.

## Foursome

The SNES iterations of Bomberman were 4-player games, but the SNES only had 2 joypad ports. Hudson's solution? This nifty looking Multitap...







# Metroid Prime

Metroid Prime, courtesy of **ugvm's** resident parasite - **Covert Badger**

OK, how to go about reviewing this? Just about everyone already knows that it's the bees knees. Xbox fanboys on newsgroups have conceded that it's superb. IGN's PS2 and Xbox reviewers rave about it. Gamespot rated it alongside Halo. Gamerankings.com has it as the second best game ever (after Zelda OoT). So what I'm going to do is skip explaining why, in general, this is such a good game (there are already thousands of words of print covering that little fact) and focus in particular why I like it as a self-confessed fanatic of the Metroid franchise.

To start with, let me reiterate one point - this *is* Metroid in 3D. It's the best example of 2D to 3D conversion since the aforementioned Zelda - and trounces the seminal Mario 64/Sunshine in that respect (when will we get a Mario game that has the

old mechanic of kicking an empty shell and following it as it kills Koopas and Goombas?). This is not a first-person-shooter. It could be compared to Halo (as many people have been doing) from a technical, graphical, system-seller standpoint, but gameplay-wise it's like comparing Super Metroid to Contra III. Not the same thing at all, which is why it doesn't use a typical FPS control system - people whinge about this, but **THIS GAME IS NOT AN FPS**, and the controls are sublime from the very second you realise this fact. OK I admit I've made the occasional mistake expecting to strafe with the left stick, but that's my fault and not the game.

Most first-person-perspective games have been shooters or RPGs, but the bosses (what few there have been) have been uninspiring. Metroid Prime represents a giant leap in this respect - the bosses have a real classical feel to them and are one of the principle factors in making this a real Metroid game. Remember the sense of foreboding, and ultimate satisfaction, you would get when facing and eventually beating a boss in games like Starfox, R-Type, Zelda, Axelay, or (in particular) Super Metroid? It's all here. Walk into a boss room, and you get a big swooping camera fly-over introducing the bad guy and hinting at the weak spot. Then it's a case of attacking the boss until a weak spot is revealed and then going for it.

This is no FPS shoot-until-they-drop -each boss is a puzzle. As an example, I'm going to have to use a minor spoiler - skip to the next paragraph if you don't want to know. The boss Flaahgra is a giant plant that





attacks with various toxic strikes. To beat it, you have to pummel it with missiles until it is stunned, then whilst you have a moment's respite use a charge beam on the mirrors that reflect nourishing sunlight onto the boss, supplying its power (photosynthesis, dontcha know). When the mirror is disabled, You can morph into a ball and roll into the roots and drop a bomb to strike a damaging blow. Clues to this method are provided by the introductory cut-scene, and also by information gained by a scan of the enemy.

I can't stress enough how much the bosses add to the game. Too many games today are focused on giving you a huge environment to explore and have blatantly scripted set-pieces instead of proper bosses. Metroid Prime has the best of it all. Imagine the 'Truth And Reconciliation' assault in Halo combined with a Devil May Cry boss fight, and you still aren't even close. The only downside to the boss fights is the fact that, in order to get info about beating them (in addition to adding data to your log book), you have to scan them - which is damn difficult when the boss is going all out to kill you. I've lost nearly a third of my energy just trying to get a scan, which makes the ensuing fight a lot more difficult. This isn't so much a criticism, however, as an admission of ineptness on my part. Grr.

The map, also, is

fantastic. Other games use 3D maps, but it really is well implemented here. Each room you enter has a proper 3D representation, with all the doors colour-coded so that you know which weapon opens each door. You can see at a glance whether a door is at ground level, or whether it's embedded halfway up a wall or only accessible with a morph ball etc. After a power up is gained, it pays dividends to have a good scroll around the map to look for likely possibilities that can now be exploited in previously-explored rooms, and adds tremendously to the concept of exploration that lies at the core of this game. Furthermore, every single room and corridor is named, which makes it immeasurably easier to navigate when you revisit areas.

The pacing of the game is something that the Metroid series has always had absolutely nailed. Once you get a few powerups, it's very satisfying to go back over some old ground and deal out some heavy slaughter to the enemies that once gave you grief, but as soon as you move into a new area you are immediately stretched. Once you get a new ability all the puzzles get harder and require your new ability, as well as presenting you with new puzzles that you can't solve yet, so you are constantly updating your to-do list of things to come back for. Moreover, the sense of apprehension at times put Resident Evil to shame. Revisiting an old area has you brimming over with confidence because you have better weaponry and more confidence in your own ability, whereas new areas have you creeping in carefully with the scan visor equipped to try and spot bad guys before they ambush you.





## Review

The word here, is *atmosphere*, which is heavily bolstered by the scan-logs you pick up as you go along. Fragments of Chozo Lore give you a history of the areas you are exploring, and some of the Space Pirate logs are quite chilling. Most importantly, the scan-visor acts in tandem with game events as a mechanism to tell you the game story without resorting to cliched non-interactive cut-scenes. As someone that prizes gameplay a million miles above cut-scene exposition, this is something I hope to see widely adopted throughout the industry. Metroid and Splinter Cell (and to a lesser extent GTA: Vice City) have led the way this Xmas and I hope and pray next year's games take inspiration from the masters.

Graphically, Metroid Prime is astounding. The level of invention is astonishing, and while the texture detail isn't quite up to Halo, it sets new standards in architecture design, artwork, and complexity. If Nintendo have any sense, they will provide game shops with huge TVs and RGB connections on the UK release next March, because this game can't fail to demonstrate to even a casual gamer that the GC murders the PS2 technically, and is right up there with the Xbox when pushed.

I could continue this review for a hundred pages, detailing every little wonderful detail I've seen so far, but I wouldn't want to spoil the game for anyone. It is, basically, an essential game of the like that we see all too rarely. Everybody should play this game - it embodies a pinnacle that sets a standard for every new game to aim for, be it ingenuity, invention, control, sound, structure, or imagination. Nintendo aren't exactly on top of the world right now, but this games serves to reaffirm the faith of Nintendophiles everywhere - if you buy a Nintendo console, you are guaranteed to get an exclusive game that revolutionises gaming. From Mario Bros 1, 2, and 3, through F-Zero, Mario World, Mario Kart, and Starfox, beyond Zelda OoT, Mario 64, Goldeneye, and Wave Race, though to Metroid Prime - Nintendo always come up wth the goods, and I have no hesitation in suggesting that Prime will become one of the most illustrious games in Nintendo's enviable portfolio.

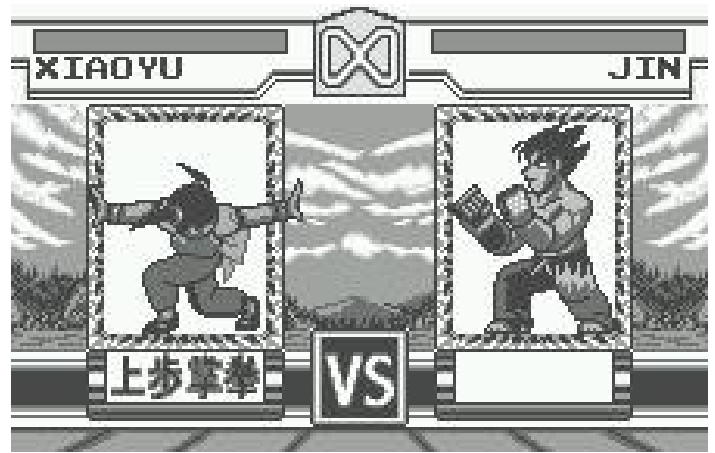
5/5

ugvm

Gold Award

## Review

W/S



# Tekken

A fighting game without actual fighting?  
Is **deKay** Tekken the mick?

Tekken on the Wonderswan is a bit different to the Playstation game. It isn't a beat-em-up. In fact, it's a card game.

The basic idea, is that you walk around an area, picking up cards. Each card is stored in your pack, and is a fighting move. You then bump into enemies and 'fight' by selecting cards. Not that there is much skill involved in this though - there are four cards on display at any one time, and each is highlighted in turn rapidly. You have to stop the highlighting box on the one you want, which isn't easy. Defeating enemies gives you stars and cards. You also get stars for picking up cards. Gain 10 stars, and you trade them in at a temple for a Level Up, which gives you access to new more powerful cards. Temples also restore your energy. The aim of the game is to Level Up to Level 9, after which you can kill the end of game boss. Killing other Tekken fighters adds them to the roster on the character select screen, as you only have a few there to choose from when you start. This adds a bit of longevity to the game - "gotta get 'em all".

Graphics are pretty good, although animation is minimal. This actually works well for the fight sequences though. Sound is very good, with plenty of speech (in English) to listen to. The game is generally quite good, and although it may seem like it could get monotonous, it doesn't really, as the 21 characters are so different - some with potentially huge combos, some with heavy attacks, etc. It does make the game different for each character. Don't be disappointed that it isn't a fighting game, be glad it's something more original - and being original is something the Wonderswan seems to be good at.

3/5



# Doshin the Giant

**Tim Miller** finds that he doesn't quite agree with issue 2's illustration...

Doshin the Giant is one of Nintendo's range of "innovative" games - console games which you wouldn't expect to see - outside Japan, at least. You control the giant, Doshin (or Jashin), and must make the villagers happy (or fearful) in order to grow. If the villagers are suitable happy (or fearful) they'll build a monument, and this is the point of the game - you've got 16 to have built.

So, how's the game work? It's really innovative and exciting. You raise or lower ground near to villages, and this makes the villagers happy, and they'll multiply and eventually build a monument. You also have to make trees grow near villages. As I said, very innovative and exciting... unless you've played Populous before, of course. As Doshin, there are uncanny similarities. As Jashin (who you can turn into at any time), however, you can destroy houses and stamp on villagers, and rule by terror. Which may be more fun...



There are four different colours of villagers, and the monument that is built depends on the colours involved in building it. Ironically, it's often hardest to build a monument from just one colour, since the villagers become intermingled quite quickly. When they're ready to build a monument, they'll want a flower, and since there's only one on the island, you'll have to hope it's somewhere near so that the villagers don't get bored and build a boring pile-of-stones.

The game runs quite slowly - Doshin ambles along even when you've got the analogue stick tilted full-pelt. Jashin is slightly quicker, and can glide in the air, but this isn't that desirable when the villagers are petrified of him. As a result you'll often hear news of



a disaster (tornado, fire, or so on) and arrive just in time to see it destroy the last few houses of a village. It's frustrating. On the other hand, the slowness of the game is a benefit when you come to walk near a village, since stamping on the villagers doesn't help their feelings towards you ...

The aim of getting all 16 monuments isn't all to do in the game, however. There's a lot of fun to be had by just nurturing the islands and the villagers, and occasionally going on a rampage with Jashin. Founding new villages is amusing too, although occasionally frustrating.



It's a game that you could play for ages, or you might get bored of in two days. You certainly shouldn't be paying £40 for it, but at the same time it's a beautiful idea and well executed. If you see it for £20 or less, buy it on the spot. I, personally, love it.

**3/5**





# Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Unlike Sarah Michelle Gellar, **Michael Price** won't be appearing in FHM's 100 Sexiest list.

It's finally here. Any more delays and the game may well have become the X-Box equivalent of the much maligned Freeloader. Now that it's finally shown up (on Friday the 13th - coincidence? I think not), did it justify those delays? Let's see.

You're unsurprisingly cast in the role of Buffy Summers, who, for the uninitiated, is the Chosen One, a girl chosen to fend off the evil of vampires and other demons - a Vampire Slayer. The game takes place after the end of series two, although the plot is

written solely for the game. The Master (leader of all the vampires, as you might have guessed) was thought to be dead after Buffy killed him and crushed his bones with a sledgehammer. Alas not, as a group of vampires are looking to bring him back, and guess what? You've got to stop them.

The game is a third-person platformer/beat 'em up with the camera following Buffy around. The left thumbstick controls movement while the right thumbstick controls the camera. The system works well and I never managed to lose the camera, or Buffy. Kicks and punches are assigned to A and X respectively, with jump on B and use item on Y. If the camera ever does get stuck, a quick flick of the left trigger brings it back in line.

Most of the early Buffy characters play a part in the plotline and cutscenes during the game. Willow, Xander, Cordelia, Spike, Angel and Giles the watcher are all included and brilliantly represented, both by accurate facial mapping, and by the voices of their TV cast members. The script is also brilliantly written and acted, and captures the spirit of the TV series perfectly.

The only disappointment is the absence of the



centrepiece - for reasons unknown, Buffy herself (Sarah Michelle Gellar) does not feature in the game, and is voiced and represented by a sound/look-a-like. The casting folk chose well though, as the substitute Buffy is as good a replacement as they were going to get - she captures Buffy's dry wit brilliantly and you don't really miss Gellar that much at all.

There are several different areas in the game and all are, again, exceptional. You start with basic training at a mansion and move through churches, docks, mansions and Sunnydale High School. Of course, along the way you will meet vampires and other nasty demon-types. The combat system in the game is pretty decent in this respect, with combos being strung together with ease, and slayer special moves achieved simply by holding down rather than tapping a button at the right time. The only real flaw is in the repetitive nature of the nasties you'll face, and the frequency with which you'll hear the same one-liners over and over again. At first they're reasonably amusing, but by the time you reach the end of the game (which isn't entirely easy), they may well have started to grate somewhat.

It's nice to be able to recommend a licence-based game for once. After all the delays, it seems The Collective has used the time to hone the game to near-perfection. An excellent combat system meets a level of authenticity not often seen in games of this type (albeit without Sarah Michelle Gellar) - the game



is only let down by repetitive speech and enemies. It wouldn't have hurt the X-Box to launch with this game at all - and with the price at an all time low, maybe now is the time to pick one up - and this with it.

4/5



# Freestyle Scooter

**Tim Miller's** disappointed there's not a Vespa in sight.

Reviewing a game isn't all fun, you know. To review a game properly, you've got to put in quite a few hours, discovering all the nuances of the controls, the animation, the subtleties of gameplay. You would be more than happy to do that for Super Mario 64, Pikmin, Chu Chu Rocket! or Pro Evolution Soccer. Then there are games like Freestyle Scooter.



Freestyle Scooter is a scooter game, where you go around levels doing stunts and collecting tokens. Each level has a time limit, you score points for particular event, and... do I need to go on? Stick a handlebar on Tony Hawk and you're here.

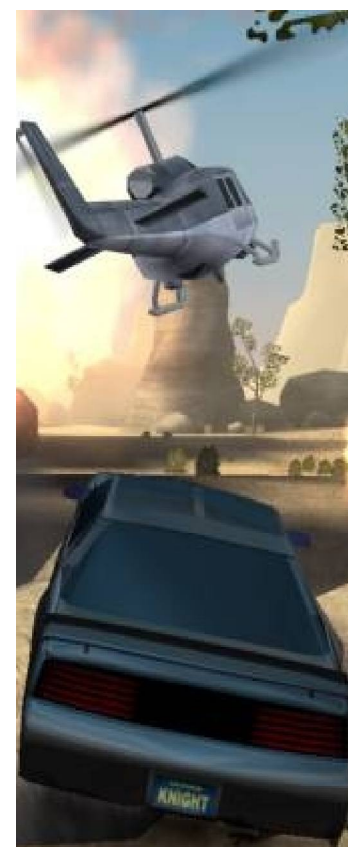
The difference is that Tony's got some challenge, whereas Freestyle Scooter seems to be aimed at those who wouldn't know a joypad if it bit them. If you're at all proficient at games, you'll complete this in a day, two at most - not "complete"

as in "finish with one character" but "complete" as in "finish with a few characters, and lose all will to unlock the rest of the stuff".

It's not all bad. The game's graphically good, and aurally average. Some of the levels are quite well planned out. The problem comes with the competition - when you can get Tony Hawk's 2 for the same price, Freestyle Scooter is shown to be the inferior and lacklustre product it is.

2/5





# Knight Rider

**Daniel Spreadbury** takes a shadowy flight into the world of a man who does not exist... to review this drive-em-up.

Knight Rider was undoubtedly the king of the Saturday tea-time TV treats. Competing fare like *The A-Team* couldn't offer the thrills and spills of a talking car that could leap through semi-articulated trucks in a single turbo boost. Sure, it wasn't perfect: there was the clunky acting, the identikit storylines, the dodgy 80s haircuts, and Bonnie's foul green jumpsuit, but that was all easy to overlook... the car was the star.

*Knight Rider: The Game* follows the formula of a single TV episode and is sadly just as insubstantial. The player controls KITT (the talking car) and races through 15 missions, which are split between four playing styles: scan-em-up, chase-em-up, ram-em-up, and... platform game. Yes, this is a driving game that thinks it's a platform game. And no, it doesn't work.

The game opens with the obligatory training level in which the player is introduced to KITT's special abilities (namely the turbo boost and 'ski mode', in which KITT balances on two wheels in order to pass through narrow gaps). Immediately the flaws in the game's design are apparent: rather than using turbo boost to leap over passing trains or smash through trucks, the player has to make his way across a series

of platforms. And rather than using ski mode to nip down narrow alleys, the player has to cross a series of narrow beams above precipitous drops (perhaps the stupidest thing about this is that you can use ski mode at any speed - even stationary - which is completely impossible, but there you go). Negotiating the pixel-perfect jumps and balancing acts necessary to complete the training level is a difficult and frustrating experience, and doesn't bode well for the game proper.

A reasonably-done pre-rendered cut-scene (which could have been done in-engine but presumably wasn't because it includes human figures, otherwise absent from all surroundings in the game) tells us that a bank has been robbed, and KITT and Michael Knight are sent to investigate. Harking back to the TV series's most memorable nemesis, it turns out that Garth Knight, together with Goliath (a huge and invincible semi truck) and KARR (KITT's prototype) are behind the bank raid, using their ill-gotten gains to fund the mass-production of the molecular bonded shell that makes KITT so indestructible.

A typical scan-em-up mission involves driving somewhere within a time limit, scanning a building or radio mast or whatever, then driving somewhere else

before the time runs out. The desert roads in which the game is set are sparsely populated with other traffic, so there's very little challenge here, unless you're unlucky enough to have to negotiate some platforms in order to reach the target.

You get the feeling that the platform elements were introduced just to stop the player from completing every level on their first try. Using the turbo boost to hop up onto crates (yes, crates) and then leap over walls or from one roof to another does create a bit of a challenge, particularly as it's usually not at all clear which direction the player needs to go in - a green arrow at the top of the play area gives the general direction of the objective, but doesn't take into account any nonnegotiable obstacles that are in the way - and the handling of KITT is ridiculously twitchy.

The real - if short-lived - fun of the game is in the chase-em-up sections. At different points in the game, KITT has to give chase to a helicopter and to KARR. The helicopter chase involves avoiding landslides (presumably set off by missiles fired by the chopper, although there's no actual evidence of this) and proximity mines (again, what are they doing there? The chopper doesn't drop them), occasionally using the turbo boost to leap over some impassable rocks; a nice touch is the little slow-motion cut-away of the more impressive turbo boost leaps.

The two ram-em-up missions, in which KITT must disable Goliath and KARR respectively, are very disappointing: there's no visible damage inflicted on any of the vehicles, and the AI is so poor that it's quite possible for the player to end up circling the computer-controlled vehicle, because it simply tries to take the shortest route to bashing you. It's all over too quickly and there's no explosion or even good sound effect - just a jingle and the words 'Mission successful' on the screen.

It's this kind of anti-climax that lends the game its air



of sloppiness. In one mission, for example, KITT has to bust through a window in a building in order to capture Garth Knight. However, the little green box that denotes the target points at the wrong window, so the player spends several frustrating minutes trying to bash through a solid wall; only by chance does he eventually smash through the right window, and when he does, despite KITT having said that there was a person in that room... it's empty! 'Mission successful', jingle, screen fades.

The platform sections are so flawed that the game even includes a 'respawn' key, so if KITT ends up on its roof after a failed jump, a stab of the key will place the car back in a suitable location, ready to try again... and again... and again.

Amusingly, in the occasional in-engine cut-scenes, you'll often find that one of the few cars on the road will stop for no reason at your location (even if you're safely parked up off the road), and then a number of other cars will blindly smash into the first one, for absolutely no reason. And best of all, at the beginning of one of the chase-em-up sections, the cut-scene consists of the chopper flying overhead, Michael Knight yelling, "Get after him, KITT!"... and then just sits there for a good five seconds, the player unable to move. It's just lazy.

One of the static text screens interpolated between each of the missions states, "Research on G-Industries business hasn't revealed anything interesting yet." How right they are. This isn't a bad game, but it's certainly not a good one, and there's only limited enjoyment to be had here.





## Medal of Honor: Spearhead

**Daniel Spreadbury** bites them on the features.

EA's World War II cash cow finally hit the PC at the end of 2001 with Medal of Honor: Allied Assault, a truly excellent first person game that outgunned and outflanked fellow shooter Return to Castle Wolfenstein, which was released around the same time. Developers 2015 just got everything right: dramatic pacing, atmosphere, narrative, astonishing set-pieces, all of which combined to make MOHAA an intense slice of gaming goodness.

One year on, EA has released the first expansion pack for MOHAA, Spearhead, which follows Sgt. Jack Barnes of the US Airborne Division through three new scenarios. As we join our valiant paratrooper, he is waiting to drop down behind enemy lines in Normandy on D-Day, and before his tour of duty is over, he'll weather the harsh winter of 1944 in the Ardennes forest at the Battle of the Bulge, before finally riding into Berlin on a tank with his Russian allies in April of 1945 on a counter-espionage mission.

Each mission is divided into a series of shorter levels, and the same mix of game types found in other MOH games is present and correct here, too. There are some great set-pieces: manning the gun on the back of a truck as it careens through the snowy Ardennes forest, taking out gun positions and Panzer tanks; using an anti-aircraft gun to take down a German

fighter, which cartwheels into the ground in a most satisfying way; taking out buildings and demolishing a bridge in Berlin in a Tiger tank; it's all pretty memorable stuff, and each mission is paced so well that there's never a dull moment. True, it's all very linear - there's a single objective at any given time, and normally only one way of accomplishing it - and there's plenty of homage to films like Saving Private Ryan and, more blatantly, Spielberg-produced mini-series Band of Brothers, but the experience of "being" in these scenarios is so satisfying that the player never finds himself either wondering what to do next or wishing he could be doing something else.

Refreshingly there are no difficulty level settings in Spearhead; the player simply has to complete the objectives as they come. This is no mean feat - in particular, holding the line at Bastogne under an endless onslaught of German infantrymen in poor visibility is a real test of the trigger finger and of the nerves - and each of the three missions offers a considerable challenge that will not be beaten in a hurry.

The AI of the non-player characters, both friendly and otherwise, is excellent. Your squad fellows use excellent pathfinding and heal themselves in quiet moments, often yelling out handy hints about in which direction you should be setting your sights, and





the enemy troops are no pushovers; they retreat when injured, hide behind objects, and raise the alarm if disturbed. However, there's no real improvement here - AI was excellent in Allied Assault, and it's excellent in Spearhead too.

The weapon line-up has been extended, with smoke grenades being perhaps the most useful new addition - there's nothing like a big cloud of noxious green smoke to confuse approaching troops - but the new Sten and Soviet PPSH-41 machine guns certainly also come in handy.



Multiplayer has been given an overhaul, with more than a dozen new maps, including the Arnheim bridge and the blitzed streets of Berlin. There are new team-based play modes and the new soldier models (for example, the Russian troops introduced in the third of the single-player missions) can be used online. MOHAA has gained quite a substantial online following, and Spearhead should keep frag addicts happy. Gamespy Arcade is included in the install to make getting hooked up as easy as possible.

The presentation of Spearhead is, if anything, even

better than that of Allied Assault. At the end of each mission, Barnes recites some poignant verse that reflect upon the horrors of war, and the cut-scenes that prelude the missions all use real film footage of the conflict. The sound is superb throughout, with exemplary sound effects (the whiz of tracers, the yells of German soldiers, the clunking and whirring of tank turrets) and an atmospheric musical score.



The graphics, too, are gorgeous, and it's no criticism that they do not improve on the visuals of Allied Assault, which haven't been substantially bettered by other titles in the twelve months since the game's original release. It's a pity that the German officers still tend to pigeon-step in a rather silly fashion, but that's a small gripe when the level of detail is such that leaves on trees are individually rendered and flutter in the breeze. The engine is nicely scaleable, and on a reasonably recent machine with a 32Mb AGP graphics card the game looks pretty good; on a new machine with a GeForce 3 or 4, it looks wonderful and is as smooth as silk.

If there is a criticism to be made of Spearhead, it's that the single-player game presents no real innovations over the experience offered by Allied Assault. However, the MOH formula is so good, and it's so well executed, that this is easy to forgive, and the new multiplayer game modes and maps are a welcome addition. Drop down behind enemy lines and pick up this expansion pack just as soon as you can - it won't disappoint.

4/5

ugvm

Silver Award



# Yu-Gi-Oh: Forbidden Memories

**dew** only wishes his memories of this game could be forbidden...



Some of you may well have seen Yu-Gi-Oh on early morning TV, but for the unenlightened (*Such as those who are not children! Ed.*) it's a series based upon a card game from Japan. The game has its origins in ancient Egypt, goes the story, but several ancient artefacts have survived and one of these caused someone to reinvent the game.



There are various types of cards such as Monsters, Magic, Trap etc. Each monster card has an attack and defence power, which one comes into play depends on how you decide to lay down the card. In the series the duellists play on large duelling fields which simulate large 3D holograms of their monsters and traps which tends to capture the imagination a bit more than the 2D static cards might.

This Playstation game sneaked onto the shelves and indeed does have 3D models for each monster card, however it's all a bit downhill from there. The game is running on hardware that is more than 7 years old now and the 3D models show it. While the large character graphics used when talking to people are nicely drawn the 3D models are primitive even by FFVII standards and the load times are so annoying you'll find yourself making do without them anyway.

The game is highly focused on the duels as you'd expect but there is an RPG element that involves you walking around, visiting shops and talking to people. This all takes part in ancient Egypt as opposed to the TV show which is set in the present.



Even the duel mechanics themselves don't bear much resemblance to the TV show and the alternative title Yu-Gi-Oh Dark Duel Stories on GameBoy Advance has a much more satisfactory game engine and I recommend it well above what feels like a rehash of an old title to cash in on the TV sensation.

1/5



# Manx TT

Biker **Halo** gets his tail docked

You may have read in issue 02 about MotoGP being the first game ever to get the feel of a motorbike right in, a game and in the review it was compared to Excitebike 64 and Road Rash. Unfortunately, Russ Gray missed one important game from the genre - Manx TT. Having bought it a few months ago for the bargainous price of 99p, you will soon realise why it is better than its predecessors.

Being a port of a successful arcade game that had a full size motorbike as its controlling method, when you first start it you don't know what to expect. Will it handle arcadey? Will it handle like a simulation? Thankfully, it's a combination of the two. While it isn't the most realistic game - it is an arcade port afterall - it isn't unrealistic either. By making it impossible to fall off the bike it enables even the worst gamer to enjoy the game while making the game difficult enough for it to be a challenge. The handling also feels tight enough so that you don't feel that you are sliding all over, while still making you have to use the brake. This is a game very much in the Sega Rally/Daytona mould.



Unfortunately, the game isn't perfect. The lack of a wide selection of tracks is a major problem and the game is quite simplistic - the same problem that dogs both Daytona and Sega Rally. However, anyone who is interested in this genre should get this game - particularly when you consider you could buy a Saturn and this game for less than the price of MotoGP on its own.

**3/5**



# Zoocube

**Tim Miller** shows a bit of Monkey Magic

Zoocube has a ridiculous plot. Utterly ridiculous. So ridiculous, in fact, that you'd be well advised not to read it. And skip the cut scenes.

And get into the game. You have a cube in the middle of the screen, which you can rotate four ways. It would be a lot easier if you could rotate it six ways, but you can't. Remember Blockout on the Megadrive? (*Of course we do, you fool - you reviewed it last issue! Ed.*). You could only rotate the blocks one way. This has a similar artificial limitation, and one that'll have you cursing before long. But all games have limitations, and you'll adapt in time. You have coloured shapes falling towards the cube from three directions. You must let the shapes land on the cube, and rotate the cube so that two of the shapes match up next to each other on one side. Then these disappear.

It sounds simple, but the game is far more complicated than that. You can change the order of the pieces on each side of the cube, you can pick up powerups to help you. The game gradually introduces new shapes to the game. It's all good, addictive, puzzle fare, and it's a very good game.

But only after you've spent ages getting into it. And for that reason alone - the horrible complicatedness of it all - it can't get full marks.

**4/5**

**ugvm**  
Silver Award





# Jet Set Radio Future

**Jim Taylor:** Avril Lavigne's "Sk8er Boi" (he wishes)

Jet Set Radio Future is, rather predictably, the sequel to Jet Set Radio on the Dreamcast (featured at number 4 in ugvd best-ever-games, fact fans) and also rather predictably it's really quite good. The original Jet Set Radio was one of the pioneers of the cel-shaded look that we've become accustomed to seeing and JSRF continues with this style. There are no massive graphical improvements but everything seems faster and slicker, and of course there's far more levels this time around.

For those of you unfamiliar with the idea behind the game you are in control of a gang known as the "GG's" and are charged with roller-blading about various city locales, "grinding" over and on railings/stairwells/roofs and spray-painting your gang's tags (variations of which can be collected throughout the game or created by you) over those of the rival gangs such as the Love Shockers and Poison Jam, to name but two. You also have to occasionally race, chase and tag members of the gangs on each

level and partake in 'capture the flags' challenges until you defeat the evil Rokkaku group who are trying to take over Tokyo. Sounds thrilling, no? No? Well it is. It takes a while to get used to the controls of the game but once you have a grasp of the physics, and the handling, you will soon enjoy simply grinding your way around the various levels while chilling to





the excellent in-game music. Oh yes, the music: a wide variety of hip-hop/lo-fi tunes accompany you as you traverse the levels, all played by the titular Jet Set Radio; a pirate radio station that strings the storyline along and directs you where to head next. You'll soon find the songs stuck in your head and will likely begin humming them constantly, much to the annoyance of friends, family and co-workers alike. Unfortunately, although there are about 30 tracks in the game, you will soon hear them all through many times and wish they'd added just a few more or allowed you to import your own.



JSRF is rather more free-form than the previous game in that you can, if desired, head back to a previous level just to chill-out before re-trying a particularly vexing task. Plus with a multitude of tricks and surfaces to play around on you can easily while away hours just grinding about the levels. There are also a number of 'Street Challenges' to keep you going wherein you have to perform a number of tricks and accumulate a certain amount of points etc. Plus there's the collection of the graffiti souls (new graffiti tags), new characters to find and unlock and a series of Jet challenges too, once the



street challenges have been cleared. All of which should keep you going long after you've finished the game proper and ensure that you'll still be able to pick up and play the game whenever you feel like it.

However the game isn't perfect; and one of my main gripes is that although the levels are larger the game is actually easier than the first one - I worked my way through it in a weekend whereas the DC original kept me going for a while longer than that. Other problems include the occasional moment of slowdown and some slightly annoying camera problems that cause you to lose control momentarily.



Yet despite these flaws Jet Set Radio Future is still a damn fine game, one that defies categorisation and is all the better for it.



4/5

ugvm

Silver Award



# Super Monkey Ball

**Halo** finds out exactly how much fun a monkey's balls can be. Lots, apparently.

Super Monkey Ball is a game. About monkeys. In balls. By Sega. Make sure you know this before purchase - it is not a French delicacy nor is it some sort of obscene video. However, it is one great game.

This was the game that was arguably the highlight of the Gamecube launch day, and is a weird arcade port of an obscure game no-one had ever heard of. But calling SMB an arcade port doesn't really do it justice, as that brings up memories of other Sega arcade ports such as Crazy Taxi - this is more than an arcade port.

The object of the main game is to negotiate obstacles such as bumpers, moving platforms, and impossibly steep hills to get to the exit in as quick as possible time. When you first start the game, you power up Beginner - one of the three initial difficulty levels available to you, you have a really difficult time playing the game. The control system doesn't seem

"right" and the levels seem to require as much luck as skill. However, once you spend a good 20-30 minutes figuring out exactly how the control system works you realise how much pressure is required to go a certain distance and how intuitive the control system is - a perfect match for the Gamecube controller. That is why this game is so frustrating - it looks so easy yet is extremely difficult and irritating not being able to complete a level.

The visuals are also surprisingly lovely for a game which has no reason for good graphics. Most developers just wouldn't bother putting good graphics on a game that will appeal to a niche market.



Unfortunately, a few of the levels in the Expert difficulty have a couple of problems - at least one relies completely on luck and one has a major speed problem.





After playing for some time, you then get enough play points to open up all of the 6 mini-games - Monkey Bowling, Monkey Golf, Monkey Race, Monkey Billiards, Monkey Target and Monkey Fight. Monkey Bowling is a particularly brilliant game, where you set direction and speed and then the monkey you use throws itself down a lane. It's surprisingly fun and addictive. Monkey Golf is probably the second weakest of all the games - you have to use the monkey by setting power and speed. Very difficult and there is very little strategy to it as you can use the C-stick to judge distances for you.



Monkey Race is the weakest of the games although is a lot more fun in multiplayer - it is a game where you race the monkeys and have different power-ups to attack with. Unfortunately, this is the only game that suffers from slowdown and this is a major disappointment.

Monkey Billiards is a game of 9 ball pool that easily competes with the previous best pool simulator - Virtual Pool. Addictive, lots of fun in multiplayer and has the physics just right making it my favorite minigame.



Monkey Target involves throwing your monkey off a ramp towards the sea, and try to get them to drop on a floating target with different scores on. A lot of fun in multiplayer and requires both skill and strategy.

Finally, Monkey Fight sees the monkeys with boxing gloves attached to their balls and you have to try and punch each other out of the arena. This generates obscene amounts of fun. These mini-games in themselves justify the purchase of this game.

In conclusion, the game is a lot of fun as long as you have the patience to play the main game without getting extremely frustrated. While the "childish" graphics may make people think this is a game for young children - it is not. A young child would not have the patience to complete this game. If you can see through the minor slowdown problems, this game is very good. Unfortunately, after you have completed the Expert difficulty you are resigned to the inevitable "I can't be bothered completing it again" problem. However, Sega have remedied this by including the many mini-games for your continuous enjoyment and many extra levels for you to unlock if you have enough skill, but even these become repetitive after a while. This game will, however, provide more enjoyment by replaying it many weeks after putting it on the shelf.

4/5

ugvm

Silver Award



between characters. The action could be said to be 3D in that you can move towards and away from your opponent and side step around the arena however there is no jump option. Some attacks will launch your opponent into the air or towards the ground but they will usually recover and float in midair as nearly all Dragonball Z characters can fly as one of their powers. This all seems very natural however and doesn't detract from the game.

Whilst the action is a little more fast paced than most 3D fighting games the button combinations are familiar if a little simple for the most part. The moves are easy to learn and many button combinations are

# Dragonball Z Budokai

**dew** goes Super Saiyan and saves the universe. The scamp.

For those of you without cable, Dragonball Z is a cult anime series from Japan which finished quite some time ago. It is popular in America right now in a new dubbed format. It's a bit more low brow than some other animes and is seen by some as an entry anime. The original Dragonball followed the adventures of a young monkey-tailed boy named Goku as he searched for 7 magical Dragonballs. Dragonball Z sees Goku all grown up with a wife and child and as the series progresses more is revealed about his past and strong enemies appear to threaten the Earth and his way of life.

This new PS2 only game follows quite a bit of the Dragonball Z story taking us from the start through about two thirds of the series covering three sagas merely omitting the final Majin Buu saga currently airing on Cartoon Network. The game follows the Street Fighter/Tekken mould of old, hardly surprising given how much of the show is a series of fights

the same for other characters. For example the basic Punch, Punch, Punch, Punch, Energy combination will launch most characters signature moves. Usually these are very flash affairs consisting of launching huge beams or bolts of ki energy towards your opponent.

The story mode is well presented and feels very much like the series itself even so far as to include previews of the next saga each time you complete one. On replaying the story you can play some skipped over scenes, scenes from a different characters perspective and even unlock some bonus alternative ending scenes where the bad guy of the saga wins.

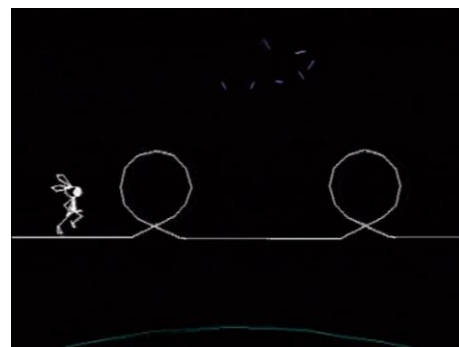
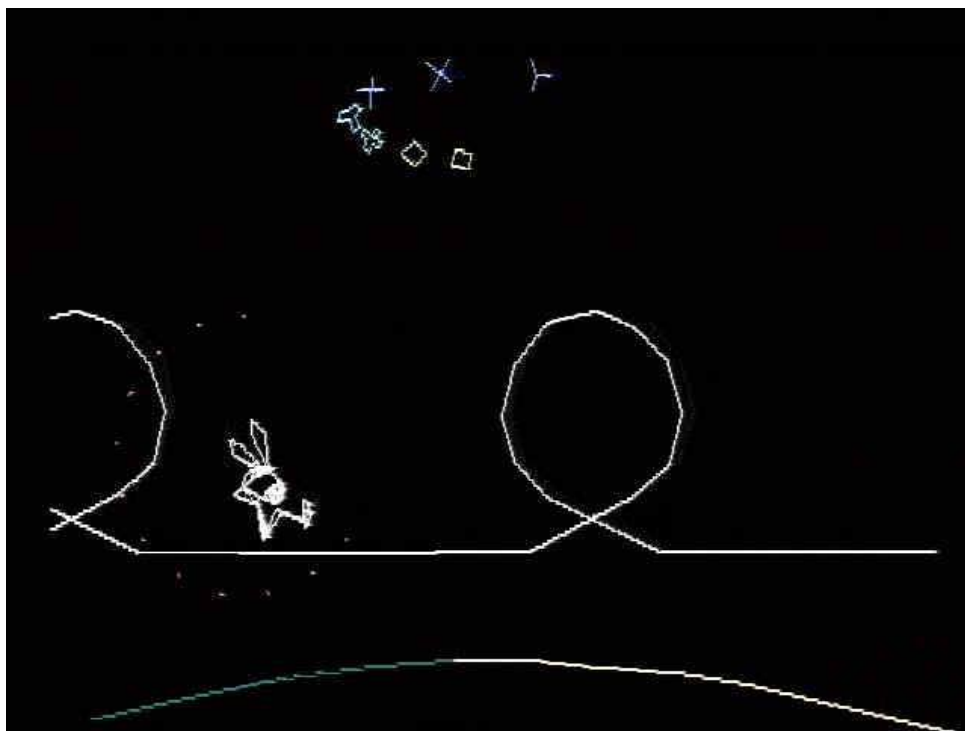
However, the subtitle Budokai refers to a tournament which features heavily in the series and that's the mode you will probably play most. By entering this competition you can earn money and harder tournament modes which in turn earn you more money for winning. With this cash you can then buy capsules which contain skills and support bonuses which you can then attach to certain characters to create your own custom character. There are some esoteric combinations you can follow.

This game follows on the heels of some rushed PS1 releases of old Japanese titles, which are utterly terrible. Luckily fans are well catered for in Dragonball Z Budokai with 23 different characters and finally some decent action game play. Gamers not familiar with the series however may soon notice that a lot of the fighters handle the same and even though a new mode opens up on finishing the tournament mode this game won't hold most peoples attention for long. Fans of the series would score it a 4 but for the greater gaming public there are in truth many better fighting games.

**3/5**







# Vib-Ribbon

**Russell Marks** goes line dancing with a white stick-rabbit. Drugs are bad, ladies and gentlemen.

Ah yes, the tired old black-and-white-vector-rhythm-shape-crossing genre. Honestly, they've no imagination these people.

Vib-Ribbon is a rhythm game in the mould of Parappa or Space Channel 5 but stripped right down to the basics, and not just graphically. You guide your character Vibri across the Ribbon, which is a line representing the music you hear, translated into shapes which you need to negotiate. You use four different buttons or combinations of them (pressed at the right time) to do this, and Vibri evolves or devolves into differing forms depending on how well or badly you do.



The game really is generated from the music you hear, so much so that you're given the option to play through your own audio CDs. Obviously, some things are more playable than others, but not in the way you might expect. Heavy, aggressive music can come out as a pathetically simple, regular pattern of shapes; an acoustic guitar track can be fiendishly difficult. The main problem with this play-your-own-CD feature is

finding something that translates into a really good level, rather than one that's far too easy or difficult. Fairly stripped-down music without too busy a sound seems to work best - for example, among the better tracks I found were The Cure's "Boys Don't Cry", and Soundgarden's "Spoonman".

As for the game's own music - six tracks over three difficulty levels - it's quite good, in a slightly odd Japanese pop/rock kind of way. It seems to suffer from being bent over backwards to make the levels more interesting, though, with gratuitous tempo changes and the like.

The game has some curious limitations. You can't save high-scores, even for Vib-Ribbon's own levels, despite there being separate high-score tables for each of them. And the way the music has to be streamed from CD in advance (so the game can construct the level ahead of you) means that you only get mono sound. This was probably unavoidable on a console with so little RAM, but it's disappointing for a game so heavily based on music.

Overall, it's a decent attempt at a rhythm game with a bit more longevity than usual. But the basic gameplay and the difficulty of finding genuinely good CD tracks to play through mean that you still won't be playing it for long. So like most other rhythm games, it's fun while it lasts, but it doesn't last.

**3/5**

# ET, No Ta

What was actually wrong with Atari's flop?

**Tim Miller** phones home

We probably all know of the story behind ET - it was programmed in six weeks by one man, Atari spent millions promoting it, and then half the cartridges were unsold or returned and eventually buried in a landfill site.

Everyone appears to know that ET is one of the worst, if not the worst, games of all time. This is certainly debatable, given the existence of Fight for Life and World Cup Carnival. What is a truism,



however, is that ET has some serious gameplay defects.

The entire game involves you falling into pits, *just* like in the film. You have to find three parts of a telephone to enable you to phone home, and these have been put into the pits. You must jump into every pit you pass and see if there's a telephone piece in there.

Chances are that there isn't. Whether there is or not, you now have to get out of the pit, which involves floating slowly up to the top of the screen, at which point you have approximately half a millisecond in which you must press the button. Miss your chance, and you've got to start again. It often takes upwards of twenty minutes to get out of a pit, so you really don't want to fall down the next one. But you have to.

There is some variety, however. There are people walking around, who do bad things to ET. The scientists will take ET back to their lab. And then let him go, for some reason. There are FBI agents, who will take all your phone pieces off of you, and (for some reason) put them down pits again. These people walk much faster than ET, and so you'll probably be caught. Which means even more pit-falling antics.

We have extensive play-testing for games today. If there'd have been extensive play-testing back in ET's day, it'd never have seen the light of day. The game is dull, frustrating, illogical, ugly, unfair, unimaginative, and shameless. It should be left in one of its own pits. In fact, it pretty much was.

## Retro Review

MD

# Golden Axe

Annoyed at his ban from making 'big chopper' jokes, **Jambo81** has an axe to grind...



Golden Axe is a game that hasn't aged too well. It's another that has been superseded by later games that took what it did, and improved on it. I've played it through a few times with a friend, and was pretty disappointed. It's simply not as good as games like Streets of Rage.

This is because it's too simple. It comes down to hacking and slashing with the attack button, or jump attacking if it seems appropriate. You can't grapple or do anything vaguely advanced. There are extras thrown in to the mix, like gaps to jump over and hit people down, and dragon things that you can ride and attack with, but these are few and far between.

When one of the major things spicing up gameplay is fighting on two height levels occasionally, you know something's wrong. Magic comes in to play occasionally, but it's generally just saved up to take some energy off bosses.

To sum up, it's a scrolling beat 'em up which is pretty dull and has been surpassed. Its only saving grace is that you get to be a dwarf with a big axe. Plus, according to Sonic The Comic, he eats rat burgers. What more do you want? Exciting gameplay or something? Oh, never mind then.

2/5





# Pacman Collection

Namco take yet another bite of **tssk's** cherry (f'nar). And his wallet.

Much in the same vein and presentation as the Namco Museum, Pacman collection features more old arcade games from Namco's back catalogue. This time the titles included are the original Pacman, the late 80's remix Pacmania, the 90's remix Pacman Arrangement and Pac Attack, a Tetris style puzzle



game thrown in for good measure.

The first three all follow the same formula, clear the maze of dots and avoid ghosts. Power pills (larger dots) allow you to turn on the ghosts for a short time, consuming them for points.

The presentation of the original Pacman is pretty much the same as with Ms Pacman on Namco Museum. You can either play with the full playfield in miniscule scale or a zoomed in view which leaves you blind as to where the other ghosts may be lurking. Why Namco didn't include an option to turn the playfield 90 degrees or allow a deformed stretch view is beyond me. As it is you can either see all of nothing or a small portion of something. And while some nostalgics may prefer the purity of the original Pacman, others will find the lack of variety dull with the one maze repeated over and over.

Pacmania has a more isometric viewpoint and while again you can only see a portion of the maze at any one time this is made up for by two additions to the basic formula. A jump button allows you to clear

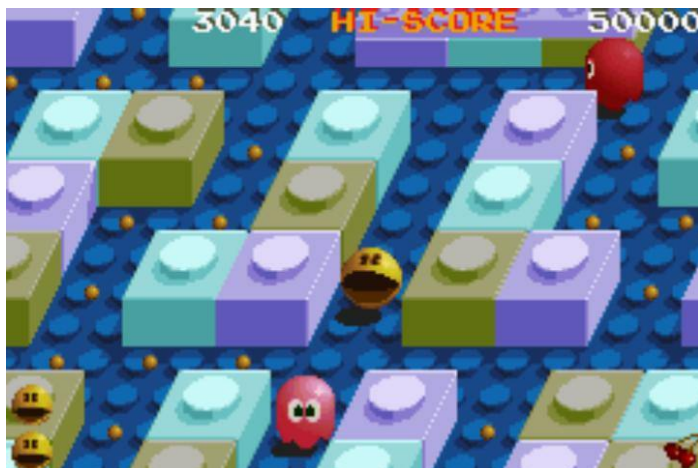
## Retro Review



ghosts, handy for when you get trapped. The player has to beware of becoming over reliant on this strategy, though, as later ghosts can also jump. An audible warning also sounds whenever a bonus appears at the centre of the maze. These can either be the traditional point scoring fruit or bonus pills that give you extra speed or extend the ghosts vulnerable time. This is a fairly accurate conversion of the coin op although unlike the coin op, you cannot choose to start from a later stage. Music in this conversion also suffers; the original tunes cut down into short loops. Curious given that even the C64 version was able to fit game and complete music in 64k. Still, it's a lot more fun than the original and the graphics help make this one of the more visually appealing games on offer.

Pacman Arrangement is Pacman on acid. Reminiscent of Amiga remakes of classic games, this takes the basic features of the original and adds many features to the mix. While you dash around ghosts are combining, dropping dots, growing horns and charging like bulls. Meanwhile you pick up powerups, charge or warp across the maze, eat a pill and split into two. It's much more chaotic than either of the two other maze-based games, traditionalists will reel in horror but others will view it as a breath of fresh air.

Pac Attack is the black sheep on the cartridge, a cross between Tetris and Pacman. Blocks of three (in an L



shape) drop from the top of the screen, being made up of blocks of ghosts or a Pacman (or all of the above.) Whenever a line of blocks is created it disappears. Ghosts can only be got rid of by using a Pacman to eat them. There is also a Puzzle mode where a limited amount of Pacmen are provided to clear the screen of ghosts. Clear a round and a rating and password is given and you proceed to the next round. This game can be addictive in short bursts but beware; the dire music will have you lunging for the volume control.



Pacman Collection strikes me as somewhat of a missed opportunity for Namco. The amount of games on offer seems meagre given the many games that have appeared featuring our yellow friend. Want to play Ms Pacman? You'll have to get the Namco Museum cartridge. And as for Pacman Jr, the cult Super Pacman or the (average) platformer Pacland? Not on this or any other cartridge.

The lack of battery backup is also again disappointing. The ability to save your high scores would have increased the appeal of playing; as it is you'll have to write down your scores in a book or something. Ditto for the passcodes given during the puzzle mode of Pac Attack. Not something you'll want to do if you're on the move. Given that Nintendo has spruced up its very limited game and watches, by adding high score tables, histories and hidden games Namco's effort seems almost lazy by comparison.

Of course true Pac-fans have probably already bought it. For those retro gamers waiting by the sidelines I'd recommend Namco Museum for the greater variety it offers. If it had battery back up for scores and a few more games it would have scored higher, but it doesn't.



# Boy Wonder

The Game Boy is almost 15 years old, and is the world's best selling console. **Halo** and **deKay** explain.

## Game Boy

The original 4-greys Game Boy was the console that started it all. On its 1989 launch you could buy a Game Boy and Tetris for £299 and despite its huge pricetag it became a runaway success. It blew away its arguably superior competitors - the Game Gear and the Lynx - thanks to its reasonably small size and long battery life. While its 4Mhz Z80 processor was simplistic in comparison with its rivals, it was easy to program for and 3rd parties quickly adapted to it. Sony reportedly slammed its Research and Development department for not creating this before Nintendo.

## Super Game Boy

This was an adapter for the Super NES console which allowed you to play GB games on your TV. It translated the greyscale images from the games into one of several 4-colour palettes which brightened up the games. Some Super GB specific games came with enhanced features when used on a Super GB, such as better colours and a fancy border. A SGB 2 was released in Japan which also had a GB link socket to connect it to a GB for multiplayer games.

## Game Boy Pocket

Released in 1996, was the smaller replacement for the original Game Boy. While it was technically the same, the Game Boy Pocket lasted around 20 hours on 2 AAA batteries while the original Game Boy lasted 16 hours on 6 AA batteries. The only major difference on the Game Boy Pocket was the smaller version

of the link port - which was a different shape.

## Game Boy Light

This is the rarely seen backlit version of the Game Boy Pocket. Only released in Japan, it plays monochrome Game Boy games backlit - allowing it to be played in poor light. Unfortunately, battery life let the console down and was never popular in Japan, so it never saw the light of day (pun intended) in the USA and Europe.

## Mini Mario

Who better to show off the various GB machines than Nintendo's mustachioed mushroom muncher?



GB Mario Land



GBC Mario Bros DX



GBA Mario Advance

## Game Boy Color

Released in 1998, the GBC was the first Game Boy console that had software incompatible with the original. Adding a small range of colours and a slightly enhanced processor it was a huge success in the UK, thanks to the release of Pokémon the same year. Slightly larger than the Game Boy Pocket, the Game Boy Colour used 2 AA batteries to get around 20 hours play. The Game Boy Colour totally wiped out the NeoGeo Pocket within months, even though the NeoGeo Pocket was by far the superior piece of hardware. The GBC was also more powerful than the original GB, with an 8MHz CPU.

## Game Boy Advance

Released in 2000, the GBA was the first Game Boy to be radically overhauled. Now with a horizontal instead of vertical shape, a complete redesign and completely different innards, while keeping compatibility with older games, it flew off the shelves on its launch day. The GBA is not without its problems though - the Game Boy Advance screen is often complained about for being too reflective, the screen too difficult to see and the majority of first-party titles being SNES ports.

## Game Boy Advance SP

Only just announced (see News), the GBA SP is a redesigned GBA with a backlit screen. Technically the same as the GBA, it also boasts a smaller size, and a clam-shell-like folding body and an internal rechargeable battery.

## Pocket Play

From l-r: Original GB, Super GB, GB Pocket, GB Light, GB Color, GB Advance, GB Advance SP



# Seaman Diary (part 4)

This issue, **Rev. Owen Allaway** tells us a story of death and rebirth - featuring some bizarre fish creatures, of course.

## Friday Evening

I get home from work and check in on Sushi. Leonard tells me that he's about to give birth. I'm excited, but all Sushi seems to want to do is talk about the Internet. We chat for a while. I'm getting impatient. I tell him to give birth already, but get "???" in response. Eventually, though, Sushi swims over to the side of the tank and uses his legs to pull himself up out of the water. For the first time in his life he is walking on dry land. His face is creased from the effort and he's groaning with every step he takes. I am unreasonably proud of him. He takes a few steps across the tank and turns around and walks back towards the water.

When he gets close to the edge he



stops and I watch as he passes eggs through his tentacle. Each one lands by the side of the pool and has something small swimming around inside it. The eggs keep coming until there are six lying next to each other at the water's edge. Sushi says, "I've done what I came to do. See you later." He falls onto his side and lies still. A few minutes later he still hasn't moved.

I turn off the DC and get myself a can of Coke. Then I turn the DC

back on. Leonard once more does nothing but confirm my fears. Sushi died giving birth. I watch the eggs for a while and mourn my friend. Then, without warning, all the eggs burst at once and six brown, tadpole-like creatures dive into the water. I try talking to one of them. I don't remember what I said, or what he said, but the important thing is that he is talking in Sushi's voice. It's not baby talk, it's not child talk, it's full adult Seaman talk. Although the new guys do not respond to Sushi's name, I can't help but feel that he lives on in them.

Later that evening, away from the tank, I think back to Sushi and I am suddenly sad again. This disturbs me. Forgive me for breaking the illusion here, but Sushi was not a living creature. He was a piece of software running on a games console and displayed on my TV. And yet I feel a loss. Of course, I've felt sad before when fictional characters have died. I cried when E.T. died and, more recently, I felt something when a character in Suikoden 2 died. I read a book last year where one of the characters died and I wrote that there was "a real echo of grief and loss". And there was. But it didn't come back to hit me a few hours later. There was a memory of how I felt when the character died, but the feelings themselves had gone.

Why was the death of Sushi any different? He wasn't 'real'. But he obviously existed in some ways. Of course, I interacted with him. I saw his facial expressions, heard his voice, talked to him. How do I really know that he wasn't thinking? When does a simulation of thought end and the creation of thought begin?

Seaman is the first step on that road and how we, as humans, deal with software as it becomes ever more sophisticated will tell us a lot about ourselves.

But for now, all these questions are swirling round my head and I miss my friend. This is silly. This is insane. This, people, is the future. In the interests of full disclosure, however, I should mention that this thought process does take place in the pub, from pints eight to ten. Which is near the beginning of the evening.



## Saturday

Ouch. I don't spend much time with my new Tadmen (as Leonard calls them) today. My morning visit is very short and is just a quick check to make sure everyone's still alive. The Tadmen are fine. I'm hanging on by a thread, though.

The evening visit is much more interesting and cheers me up a lot. I'm talking to one of the Tadmen about my health. He responds by telling me my star sign means I take my health for granted too much. What's important here is not his concern about my well-being, but the fact that he knew my star sign. He remembered. Sushi's



memories truly do live on in the new breed. So, while Sushi has died, all his memories and his personality live on. And while his personality is perhaps not something that most people would see as a positive character trait, I'm just glad he's still around.



## Sunday

The morning visit is, again, quite short. I heat up the tank and make sure the moth cage is nice and damp. I've got a real little ecosystem in there. Moths lay eggs. Eggs hatch into larvae. Larvae eat plant. Larvae become moths. Spider keeps moth numbers down. I talk to one of the Tadmen for a bit. Nothing important, just a general chat.

"Seaman." (This is a good standard greeting.)

(!)"This better be important."

"How are you?"

(!)"Been better, been... worse."

"Hungry?"

(!)"Nah, I don't think so."

"Need anything?"

(???) "Coming, your majesty."

Eventually we get talking about games consoles. The conversation starts in the morning and continues during my evening visit. He asks me whether I like my Dreamcast, whether I own any other games consoles, that sort of thing. His response when I tell him I also own a Playstation is hilarious, but writing it down wouldn't do it justice. It's the way he tells them. During the conversation a Tadman swims under the one I'm talking to. "Get off sucker!" the Tadman I am talking to cries. Too late. The other

Tadman plunges his tentacle into the belly of the first and sucks him dry. This is not unexpected.

Unphased - though still, surprisingly, disgusted by the sight - I move over to another Tadman and continue my conversation. He seems pleased when I tell him that I'm not really looking forward to other new consoles. He tells me this is because it means I'm not too obsessed with videogames, but I smell fear. Don't worry, Seaman, I'm not going to trade your hardware in at EB for a PS2. The Tadman seems disappointed with me when I tell him that Seaman is favourite game and tells me I don't need to suck up to him. But I'm not, Seaman is my favourite Dreamcast 'game'. And I don't think he'd have heard of Bangaioh.

He then talks about the exact thing that I've been thinking about over the weekend. He talks about his own existence. It's very strange. I guess he knew I'd be thinking about this after Sushi's death. He complains that some people say he doesn't exist. He gets quite agitated when he asks whether I know what it's like to be told you don't exist. He launches into a speech about how he's here, thinking, breathing and therefore must exist. The gist is that he thinks, therefore he is. He doesn't come right out and say that phrase, but I know it's what he's thinking. I have never before had a piece of software both acknowledge that it is software and also assert its existence as a living being. It's very strange and goes to the heart of what I said earlier. Where does simulation end and reality begin? The Tadman tells me he needs time to think about it and swims off.

As we've been talking, legs have been growing from the Tadman. They start out small, but by the end of our conversation they've grown very long and I can pick out individual toes on each foot. It's odd. It's like watching a clock. You can't see the hand move, but you suddenly realise it's showing ten

past, and when you started it was five past. The legs are like that. I don't see them change, but I do notice that they have changed. When I leave there are only four Tadmen left alive.



## Monday Morning

There still are four Tadmen. According to Leonard, the feet I saw are actually hands. The legs seem to be in the wrong place to be arms, but Leonard knows all. He also gives me another little speech about survival of the fittest, the continuation of the species, etc. Give it rest, I get the message. But as the Tadmen are just different aspects of a group consciousness (or something) it doesn't really matter. The mind lives on.

A Tadman comes over and tells me that he's decided that he does exist. He looks quite happy about it. He tells me that he guesses I never met JFK or The Beatles, but I think they existed. Yeah, but they weren't made of polygons. Not that Seaman looks bad. The faces are nicely rounded. Not perfect, but looking good. If you took Kryten from Red Dwarf, peeled his face off and placed it in the microwave for a few seconds you might have something that looked like Seaman's face. Rounded edges, but with the traces of the hard edges still there. Or you might just have a pool of bubbling plastic, which bears no resemblance to Seaman at all. Microwaves are funny like that.

Anyway, I say goodbye to a Tadman (I always say goodbye or goodnight before I leave) and go to work.

More next issue!

# My Top 5...

This issue, **Covert Badger** tells us his Top 5 initial console impressions...

This is a list of the 5 consoles that have most impressed me the first time I saw them running. In each case it was pretty much down to chance which game was running when I first clapped eyes on the screen, so don't moan at me because Ready 2 Rumble on the DC didn't blow me away.

## 5 Wave Race (GC)

Ah, what a glorious day it was in September 2001 when I received my Japanese Gamecube. Ooh, the ickle box. Aah, the tiny console. Mmmm, the weeny disks. And oh yes, a new Wave Race game, brilliant. Such lovely waves, such pretty translucency - would've ranked higher if my damn TV supported NTSC and given me a colour picture. Woohoo for RGB scart lead hacks, I say.

## 4 Ridge Racer (PS)

The SNES and Megadrive did a pretty good job of handling ports of sprite-based arcade games, but by the mid-90s a new breed of polygon games dominated the arcade - Ridge Racer, Daytona and so on. These seemed to be beyond the home consoles, until the PSX burst onto the scene with a decent version of Ridge Racer. I'm ignoring the fact that the *real* first game I saw on the PSX was Galaxians, whilst I waited for Ridge Racer to load.

## 3 Killer Instinct (N64)

I'd seen a few shots of this in an E3 report in Super Play, but they didn't prepare me for the first time I found the arcade version (supposed to be 'Ultra 64' hardware) and got my arse kicked by some random bloke who'd already mastered the combo linking system. Grr. But, Orchid got her baps out and gave Jago a heart attack, so I was sold.



## 2 Halo (Xbox)

Well it had to be in here, didn't it? The whole 'wake-up' sequence where you configure the controls and get used to moving about was clever, and although the first level itself was a little uninspiring, the second level absolutely rocked. Right at the start, before figuring out I needed to cross the bridge, I got buzzed by that dropship, then strafed by the Banshee, and it was clear that Halo was going to be something else.



## 1 F-Zero (SNES)

On one of my fortnightly weekend visits to the arcades along Southend seafront, I set eyes upon the SNES-based arcade cabinet (one of those multiplayer things, with F-Zero, Mario World, and Super Tennis in a big white cabinet with a huge monitor). The rolling demo was F-Zero. I stood, spellbound - I had read about the Super Famicom in Mean Machines, but here I was standing in front of it, a few months before the UK release, and the style, speed and smoothness of F-Zero

made every other racing game I'd ever seen look like Driving Miss Daisy. About 20 credits later, I left knowing that I had to own that game.





# Letters

A beefed up mailbag this issue, partly due to the overwhelming response to Issue 03, and partly because people want to be famous...

## My Beloved Breadbox

Dear Editors,  
I'm writing in regards to the Facing the Dark Side article, which I found very interesting. Now first off, I will admit that I was a Commodore junkie, having started with a C64 and then moving on to an Amiga until I finally broke down and bought a PC in 1995. At first I thought it was a slight on my beloved breadbox that you would think the Spectrum could perform better 3D than the 64, but after playing several 3D games on an emulator, I have to admit that this was one of the weak points of the machine. I'm guessing the Z80 processor shared by the Spectrum, MSX and Megadrive/Genesis was mostly responsible for this. But many very good polygonal games were also released on the C64 such as Gunship and Stunt Car Racer/Stunt Track Racer, so I think it would depend largely on how much effort was employed in bringing the game engine over to the C64, an effort no doubt linked directly to expected sales in the home market. But besides this, touche on that one.

I do think though that you may have overlooked the strongest titles on the C64, mainly because they were C64 exclusives or never released on the Spectrum. Remember that the true strongholds of the 64 were Germany and to a slightly lesser extent the USA, where the Spectrum was virtually unknown, and therefore Spectrum versions were hardly ever even considered or simply rushed after the fact

(which would most likely explain the weaknesses in many of the C64 games you tested). I guess what I'm saying is that both machines had their strengths and weaknesses, but that with a bit more guidance from a true C64 fan your article may have come to somewhat different conclusion.

Keep up the good work,  
**Karl Kuras, via email**

*Well, naming no names, someone (Tim Miller) dared to suggest that the Amstrad CPC would trounce both the C64 and Speccy. But then, what would he know? Ed.*

## Naked for the Feeling

Dear **ugvm**,

I was recently warned off getting Xbox Live after a friend told me that the green jewel conceals a tiny webcam. I'm concerned that when I go online Bill may choose to watch me, as I play naked for the feeling of freedom it gives me. Please help, should I stay clothed while playing Buffy?

Yours,

**Chilly in Cheadle, via email**

*Having seen you through your cam from my member (f'nar) account at Xbox.com, and having recently come out of full-time therapy as a result, I suggest that you keep your kex on during any future games sessions. Note that simply being offline while naked won't help - what do you think the hard disk is for, eh? Ed.*

## Blackest Day

Hi guys,

Earlier this day I read your review of the Amiga game Wings. Man, that really let come great memories to the surface. I remember it quite clear when I played this great game many many hours a day back in the 90's. As I was somewhere around mission 200 I recognized that my save disk was corrupt, that was the blackest day in my gaming history. I really played my ass off to get that far and

than... As I remember, I never touched this game again since that day but after reading your review I fired it up immediately and played for nearly 3 hours. Thanks for that, I think great games will never disappear.

**Wolfgang Teufel, Germany**

*I hope they don't disappear either, otherwise several shelves in my house will suddenly become very empty indeed. Ed.*

## Wet Wet Water

Dear **ugvm**,

Remember Origin's old tagline? "We create worlds". And it's true, creating an immersive world for the player is an important part of many games. Things have got a lot better over the years, with the jump to 3D, and the increased power of the current consoles, but the worlds we're playing in still fall short of the standard set over 20 years ago. Yeah, you can probably tell where I'm going with this - after reading Beyond the Balrog, I was inspired to fire up Zork and a couple of other text adventures. And guess what? I was in a world more immersive than that of Splinter Cell (not a dig at that game in particular, it's just the game I'm playing at the moment). The canyon, when I got to it, was a finer thing than I've ever seen in a game. It stretched into the distance with no popup, no ropery animation on the birds soaring on the thermals, no stencil glitching on the trees crowding the canyon walls, and the water looked like wet wet water - not some CG reflection mapping demo. There was just me and a disembodied voice responding to my commands, making my way through a world limited only by my imagination (and the 48K or whatever of RAM it had to fit in). It's been too long.

**ard, via email**

*I remember the great text adventures in the Behind Closed Doors series. Only one location and yet a more in depth game than many around today. Sigh. Ed.*

## So Badly it Hurt

I remember all those years ago when I used to have to wait months for a new game. I remember sitting in Dixons (this was the time before Game) looking at the NES games dreaming of owning Megaman 2. It was an ungodly price to me back then £40! That was like a few months pocket money all on one thing. I had my Transformers collection to keep up as well so I had to beg my parents to buy games. One of my fondest gaming memories was saving up for months for Super Mario Bros 3. I wanted it so badly it hurt. And on my birthday I opened up my present and there it was... SUPER MARIO BROS 3! And my wait was over. I finally had it. Now 10 years on I have a job, a girlfriend, and a large collection of consoles. Now I could (theoretically) afford to buy a new game every day with what I get paid. But I don't. The urge to buy games is gone for me. No longer do I go into a shop and gawp lovingly at the games and wish how I could afford to buy it. Now if I want it, I can have it. Somehow it's lost some of the appeal. No longer do I

have to wait and master my previous game before I buy a new one. I sometimes buy games and rarely play them. Recently I got Resident Evil Zero. I played it once. Kingdom Hearts, played it 2 hours. Metroid Fusion, got stuck at the end and haven't played it for weeks. Instead of fully enjoying each game, the moment I get even slightly bored I buy a new one. It's like an addiction to me. The only games that really hold my interest for long periods of time are the old skool Nintendo stuff like SMS, and Metroid Prime. That feeling of nostalgia I get from them remind me of much more nicer time for gaming in my life.

My name is Alastair Foster, and I am a gameaholic.

**Alastair Foster, via email**

*The Christmas that I got my Megadrive was a special one for me. I received two games with it - the bundled (and crap) Altered Beast, and the the game I almost wet myself playing in my local game shop earlier that year: Sonic the Hedgehog. You may have heard of it. Altered Beast lasted until Boxing Day before it was*

*completed, and Sonic until December 29th. However, it was to be two months before I was to own another Megadrive game. I played Sonic over and over, eventually being able to complete it without losing a life, and later still even without even taking a hit. It was over a year later when I stopped playing it almost every day - and that was when Sonic 2 came out. **Ed.***

## With Your Permission

Hello,  
I recently read issue #3 of your fine **ugvm** online magazine and was very impressed! I operate a very popular international gaming website which has a variety of classic gaming material for game players, collectors and hobbyists. I was particularly impressed with your article "Beyond the Balrog" about text games. We have a very popular ARTICLES section which covers similar material. We were wondering if with your permission that we could reprint your article on our website. You would be credited for the article at the beginning, and we would link to your website

## From the newsgroup

*Fearing a void at the end of the Seaman Diary, Andrew Hollingbury penned his own followup - The Tetris Diary...*

## Monday

I have been thwarted by the L shaped piece once more. It laughs insidiously in my dreams, twisting and turning and never fitting because I always need the mirror image. I shall defeat it some day.

## Tuesday

I achieved my first Tetris today. My family came rushing in with excitement as they heard my jubilant screams, though I think they were slightly disappointed to miss it. As I have been recording the sounds from my Gameboy since the third week of playing, I loop the triumphant bleeps in my room as a signal of my victory.

## Wednesday

I thought to myself, as I ate my fish fingers for dinner, that more things should have straight edges. Especially people. Then they'd fit nicely in a one square wide hole. My mother told me I was disturbed. I chose not to listen, before returning to it upstairs.

## Thursday

As I write, my hands shake, so please excuse the mistakes. The bitch has taken away my one true thing, my only friend. She doesn't understand - how could she? Why can't she see the beauty? I must get it back now. The square blocks are calling me, I feel myself falling into an abyss...

## Friday

Hahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahah  
ahahahaha.



immediately following the article. We get 7000+ unique visitors daily, so we could get you quite a deal of traffic and exposure.

If you're not familiar with GDG, we invite you to stop by and take a look at [gooddealgames.com](http://gooddealgames.com).

Cheers,

**Michael of GDG, via email**

*You have of course heard from us now, Michael, but we've decided to print your letter anyway for the sole purpose of inflating our egos. Mmmm, that feels good... Ed.*

## Often Using Tools

Some very strange choices for the history - e.g. missing out Scott Adams' Adventureland. And the text adventure is not dead. It's merely not commercial any more. Games are still being written today, often using tools like Inform, and some of them are probably the finest text adventure games ever written.

See <ftp://ftp.gmd.de/if-archive>

**Alan Cox, via email**

*To be fair to Tim, **ugvm** is a UK based magazine, and so many of the choices will be UK-centric. Oh, and Adventureland was mentioned - in the Timeline. Tim did also mention to me that he wishes he'd put "commercially dead" rather than just "dead". Too late now though Tim, isn't it? You'll no doubt burn in hell for that mistake. Mwa-ha-haaa! Ed.*

## No Actual "Mudding"

Dear Editor,

Wow, did you miss the boat or what. A friend from the IF community pointed out your magazine (very nice actually) and we had a pretty good laugh about the ending of your "history to text adventures".

It's not even close to dead. It's thriving. To get a better history, you may want to take a look at the Inform Designer's Manual (Chapter 8 especially) at <http://www.inform-fiction.org> or

maybe even peruse the official IF archive at:

<http://www.ifarchive.org>.

I'm the publisher of the Inform Designer's Manual and we had about 600 copies sold last year. In a few weeks this manual, the Inform Beginner's Guide, the IF Theory book, the Hugo Manual, and the TADS manual will also be in print and available from <http://www.iflibrary.com>.

The IF community has three major platform/languages dedicated to writing interactive fiction (Inform, TADS, Hugo) and a fourth is an offshoot of Inform and it's called Inform-Glulx. All of these languages produce bye-code files that have virtual machines ported to pretty much every CPU under the sun, including your PDA.

The IF community is centered around two Usenet groups at [rec.arts.int-fiction](mailto:rec.arts.int-fiction) (programming) and [rec.games.int-fiction](mailto:rec.games.int-fiction) (playing) as well as a dedicated mud at [ifmud.multiuser.net:4000](mailto:ifmud.multiuser.net:4000) (we just chat - there is no actual "mudding" going on).

Am I amazed that someone in the world didn't know about us? Not really. But you did such a great job on the article (incomplete as it is) that it seemed goofy.

Anyway - play some games. We have excellent authors writing fantastic games nowadays. Games that are way beyond what Infocom and others put out in the past.

Have fun and stop by the ifMUD some time.

Regards,

**David Cornelson, via email**

*Tch. Look at the trouble you've caused Tim. You bad man. Thanks for your inform-ation (groan) - I'm sure many of our readers will appreciate the links. Personally, I haven't played a new IF game in ages. There are so many old classics I've never got round to that it's simply not possible. It is good to know that the art-form is still alive and well. Ed.*

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You can help us by providing. Providing articles. Reviews. Features. Comments. Letters. Suggestions. You can even send us a freshly scrubbed female if you like - just remember to pierce the parcel in several places first so that she doesn't die in transit, poor love.

The magazine is what you make it. If you send it in, we can edit it, print it, and claim it as our own work!\*

Here's what you do. Type up your submission, and send it to [editor@ugvm.org.uk](mailto:editor@ugvm.org.uk). Make sure it's all in plain text (so Notepad or Simpletext are good choices to type it into). If you're doing a review, then please read the guidelines on [www.ugvm.org.uk](http://www.ugvm.org.uk) first. If it's a letter, mark the subject of the email as Letters.

All fairly obvious really. The only thing we ask, and this is a legal thing and so quite important, is that the work is your own, and you are not just cut-and-pasting some review or article from another website or magazine.

As always, we the **ugvm** staff can be found in the newsgroup [uk.games.video.misc](mailto:uk.games.video.misc), so you're free to talk to us there.

Please give generously.

\* Not really. Well, not *usually* anyway. Tim surely can't write all that he says he does...

## Hold The Back Page

I sometimes wonder if games companies are completely blind. They spend months, or even years, working on a game, only to find that it's pants. Surely they noticed when they were testing it? Quite often, it isn't a large part (in terms of programming) of the game that brings the score down. Sometimes, it is obvious from the very beginning - when the game is initially conceived - that it will simply be a flop.

An example for the last point is the new Gameboy Advance game "Gremlins: Gizmo vs Stripe". Who, exactly, were the designers aiming at? It's a kiddies-type platformer, based around a film that very few of the target audience will have ever seen! So the kids don't buy it, because it isn't for them, and the grown-ups don't buy it because of the simplistic "for children" gameplay. It might just have got away with it too, if it hadn't have been for those meddling, erm, identikit levels and seen-it-all-before-and-better ideas. Even the worst game themes can be saved if there's a decent game hidden in there (Kingdom Hearts is a case in point).

Other games this last year which could have been fantastic if they'd only spent a bit longer on the programmer's devkit include Turok Evolution and Starfox Adventures. Although neither game is bad, they both suffer from lack of imagination. Turok starts out nice, with lovely graphics and some decent first levels, but later on it fizzles out into a sub-par Quake/Unreal clone with little or no outstanding features. Starfox Adventures was hyped as a Zelda-beater, and ends up being more shallow than the Shigeru Myamoto classic N64 games. Gamespan is extended by annoying Donkey Kong 64-style "collect X of these, and then Y of those, and Z of the other". If only Rare had come up with a bit more actual game. Maybe they rushed it

at the end to get it finished before they leapt into bed with Microsoft.

Die Hard: Vendetta. Why is there no multiplayer mode? I'm sure many players would have preferred to wait for a bit rather than miss out on that one. Timesplitters 2 may have spoiled us, but really all they've done is raised the bar on FPS games, especially in the multiplayer modes.

Blinx has some intriguing gameplay aspects, such as being able to fast-forward, rewind, and pause the game so as to allow you to progress. It really makes use of the Xbox hardware, putting the internal hard drive to ingenious use. Sadly, apart from this plus point, it's little more than a standard platform-by-numbers. If only they'd made more of this feature, it could have been a truly original game rather than just a bog-standard one with some bells and whistles.

It seems that these days, hype is more important than content. People rushed out to buy Turok, Starfox Adventures, Blinx, Ratchet and Clank, etc. despite the games' shortcomings and in several cases, mediocre reviews. Of course, fewer people bought Gremlins, but then, some people did. Why?! What possessed them to fork out money for such rubbish? It is even more mind-boggling than the programmers and designers creating it in the first place.

The old adage of "people will buy anything" certainly seems to be alive and well in the world of videogames. Now, how about a RTS game featuring Kid 'n' Play, eh?

**deKay**

## Next Issue in **ugvm**

### Back of the Net!

The Evolution of Football Games. It wasn't always just FIFA, you know...

### Dragons Lair 3D

Dirk's back - and this time it's not just a cartoon Simon Says!

### Starfox Adventures

It's Zelda! Only with Fox McCloud! And a stick! By Rare!

### And more!

More reviews, another installment of the Seaman Diary, up-to-the-release-date news, [ugv.retro](http://ugv.retro) and another Life Of...

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